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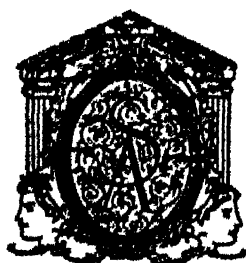


THE PSYCHOLOGY  
OF  
COMMON SENSE



A Diagnosis of Modern Philistinism

BY  
A. A. ROBACK



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*TO THOSE ALONE WHOSE REASONED LIFE  
LEND'S MEANING TO A WORLD OF STRIFE*

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## PREFACE

Although only half the essays which constitute this book have appeared before in the form of articles in periodicals or symposia, I should not have brought them together between covers, had I not received repeated inquiries and expressions regarding some of the material, which was evidently inaccessible to a number of workers in the mental and social sciences.

Another reason, however, for bringing out this collection is, more than the proverbial timeliness of the subject in general, the fact that the essays, while seemingly treating of various topics, actually can be regarded as forming a unitary whole with a single theme running through most of them, namely, the *Leitmotif* of reason.

Indeed, several of the papers, at the time they were written, were conceived as chapters of a larger work dealing with common sense and its deficiency or aberration, which marks the neurotic, on the one hand, and the philistine on the other — the two overlapping more often than is supposed.

The term "common sense" has been looked down upon as a rather loose or popular expression, ever since the Scotch "common sense" approach was let down in philosophical circles as a somewhat indolent and hardheaded method of handling problems which require precision and experimental procedure. The "common sense" school relied so much on intuition and armchair introspection that it would be natural for

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anyone with a scientific bent to inquire how such conclusions, even if concurred in by an entire group of people, could be validated.

The late William McDougall was perhaps the only psychologist of our generation to have appealed to "common sense" without fearing that he was making himself liable to ridicule. His appeal was of little advantage to him in psychological spheres. If anything, it conduced to further misunderstanding and antagonism. In his case, there might have been an over stressing of the *community* of thought, rather than its *balancedness* which is only potentially common, and which may, in the distant future, become more or less universal, but, unfortunately, is apt to be quite exceptional at any given time, so far as we know it.

In these pages, it will be seen, another construction is put on the term, "common sense", one that emphasizes the latter of the two words, in keeping with the investigating spirit of modern science, and corresponding to a certain phase of the term *reason*, which, in its fuller denotation, comprises philosophical speculation as well as judgment in the ordinary conduct of life. George Santayana's voluminous *Life of Reason* may be thought of in this connection.

I wish it were possible for me to subscribe to the definition of common sense in *The Dictionary of Psychology* as "Judgments and conclusions based upon the individual's past experience in general rather than on a critical evaluation of data." This may be one view of common sense, but it is not the conception which is



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being developed in the present book. The question which confronts us is whether *any* individual's past experience is bound to yield common sense. In that case, we must gather that either the experiences of every individual are the same, or else that common sense is only another name for individual or private sense. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is the *common residue which settles out of the various individual experiences*.

Nor is it clear that the critical evaluation of data does not enter into the development of common sense, even though the process may be telescoped. It is true, however, that a comparatively uneducated man may (although as a rule this does not happen) possess more of this article than a trained scientist. As this whole topic, however, is dwelt on at considerable length in the text, it is scarcely necessary to do more than secure a foothold for an orientation in the subject.

There are as many as twoscore books in English which contain the words *common sense* in the title, yet there is no psychology of common sense. It was to fill this need that the present volume has been brought out, and while not conceived as a textbook, it nevertheless may, *faute de mieux*, serve as one.

Probably no one will be more keenly aware of the uneven nature of the essays, than the writer himself. Some of the chapters will, doubtless, appear skimpy, *e. g.*, those on marriage, significance, and graphology. Let us consider, however, that often it is not the length of a paper which adds weight or value to the conclu-

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sions. Naturally, we shall recall the remark that one may write a sentence or a bookshelf on almost any subject. It is my belief, however, that in spite of the brevity of some of the chapters, each of the topics has been fitted into the framework of the common sense periscope. Not facts, so much as the method of illumination has been here concentrated upon.

Lest it be understood that this is only a series of fugitive essays, half of which have already appeared in print some years before, I wish to point out that not only have many paragraphs been rewritten, but considerable new material has been woven into every one of the original papers, in line with recent events and publications.

Undoubtedly there are many more phases of civilization which could be discussed in a work of this sort, but such a task would require far more than one volume. I naturally chose those subjects which were, to my mind, most important, covering as wide a range as possible, with considerable lacunae, to be sure, that may be filled in later. There are parts in the chapter on music and morosity which will probably sound dogmatic to those who do not share my views; and this circumstance, to some extent, will seem to counteract my own injunctions. When it is borne in mind, however, that these emphatic terms are, for the most part, rhetorical, conveying an idea of the author's feelings in a sphere which is largely emotional, and furthermore that there is practically no other style in which these reflections and sentiments could be imparted effectively,

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much of the grievance will be seen to evaporate. Every music critic has to tread on someone's musical corns; and perhaps in no other field of cultural endeavor have likes and dislikes been flaunted with such demonstrative aplomb as in music. The evil has its compensation; for appreciation is expressed in the same degree of enthusiasm as disgust is shown when the critic is displeased with something which reaches his ears.

The subtitle *A Diagnosis of Modern Philistinism* may need a word of justification, since it is generally believed that the philistine is the spearhead, if not the bulwark, of common sense — a belief which originates in the fact that the philistine, the self-complacent industrialist or tradesman, is practical, shrewd, and meets with at least a modicum of success.

In the light of the doctrine elaborated in the present volume, the rank and file of the middle class cannot be regarded as endowed with sense, either common or uncommon; and the illustrations offered are the empirical instances to substantiate the claim of the author. Diagnosis almost always implies that a cure is sought, or else the case is hopeless. No remedy, however, is suggested in these essays except to intimate that by analyzing our environment and behavior in terms of a standard, which is the logical rock of ages, we can not only gain from past experience but help to extend the visibility and appeal of this rock, which is coeval with humanity.

This is not a gospel of dissension. The standard is one which *can* become apparent to everyone and is resorted or aspired to, in the long run, but it is frequently

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seen in distorted form because of the angle of the observer, his prejudices, and emotional quirks.

While conformity is not the essence of common sense practice, perhaps we could adopt the device "*Conform so as to reform*". It is not so much that standards are said to vary but that no standard whatever is admitted, which produces chaos.

Those who have more than a bowing acquaintance with the works of Emerson will discern a kinship between the tenor of this volume and the general drift of his Essays, particularly his "Transcendentalist" and "Man the Reformer". My "sounds", as opposed to "surds", correspond to his "men who have in the gravity of their nature, a quality which answers to the fly-wheel in a mill, which distributes the motion equally over all the wheel, and hinders it from falling unequally and suddenly in destructive shocks." What, after all, is it but common sense, in its less vulgarized form, when we are told, in the same essay that "there is a sublime prudence, which is the very highest that we know of man, which believing in a vast future — sure of more to come than is yet seen — postpones always the present hour to the whole life; postpones talent to genius, and special results to character"?

In a sense, this volume is the sequel to my *Psychology of Character*, perhaps somewhat fragmentary, from the very nature of the subject-matter, yet, after the analogy of the refracting prism, containing the constituents of white light. The dedication itself is a vari-

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ation, on a logical plane, of the inscription in *The Psychology of Character*. And speaking of dedications, it was my intention originally to inscribe the book to "FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, President of the United States, whose administrative policies are an exemplification of the principles of common sense herein evolved", but I feared that the motive might be misunderstood and possibly lead to embarrassment. The President has been thought of, however, as one of the rare political figures to be included in the group of comparatively few persons to whom the work has been dedicated.

My thanks are due Messrs. Farrar and Rinehart, the Macaulay Company, and Dr. Leach, of *The Forum*, for allowing me to reprint some material which had been first published in their publications. The chapters on Significance and Character in a Dictator-Ridden World have been read in substance at two recent annual meetings of the American Philosophical Association (Yale and Wesleyan, respectively) Eastern Division. Aside from short abstracts, which appeared in *The Journal of Philosophy*, neither of the papers incorporated as chapters in the present volume has been presented to the reading public before. The chapters on Technological Fascism, Graphology, Marriage-Lore, and, for the most part, Music and Moronity are also brought out for the first time.

A. A. ROBACK

June 30, 1939  
Cambridge, Mass.



Chapter I

INTRODUCTION





## I

# INTRODUCTION

## THE MEANING OF COMMON SENSE

It is rather singular that although the term "psychology" is found in conjunction with almost any and every object or phenomenon one may think of, there has been no attempt made as yet to link psychology with common sense.

Perhaps the reason may be sought in the fact that "common sense" is too indefinite a subject to study, too popular a concept or too wide a field. Or it may be argued, on the other hand, that psychology is at bottom nothing else but common sense, so that, in the last analysis, we should have in such a suggested inquiry merely the application of common sense to common sense.

In reply to the above hypothetical lines of reasoning, one might say that *whatever exists is a possible object of study*, and certainly an article like common sense, which is made so much of, deserves our careful attention. If the concept of intelligence has been exploited from every angle and viewpoint, then how much more should common sense, a term which we begin to use in early childhood, be looked into by the psychologist? If "common sense" is loosely employed

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in everyday parlance, let us remind the reader that such has been true of "intelligence" also. Binet was perhaps the first who formulated a psychological definition of intelligence, although the word has been current for centuries.

In our analysis of the term "Common Sense," we observe that the first word would indicate that the possession of the quality is shared by the majority of mankind. This, as we shall see, is an important item in the general notion. "Sense," again, is the residue of our fund of experience which enables us to act soundly at any given time. Animals are not to be excluded from this privilege. Indeed, "horse sense" is sometimes taken to be a synonym of "common sense," and although in many languages to call a person a horse is tantamount to considering him a fool or "dumbbell," the Anglo-Saxon, in his contempt of metaphysical subtleties, deems it a compliment to be spoken of as possessing "good horse sense." One can understand how such recognition of a dumb beast would originate, when we recall the condition of many a driver. . . .

### COMMON SENSE AND INTELLIGENCE

Our first question is whether common sense is really the same as intelligence. The answer to this query is simple. If common sense is widely distributed, as is connoted by the very term, then we know that it cannot coincide with, although it may include, the range of what we call intelligence. Secondly, however, I should

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contend that there are many intelligent people whose common sense is but limited.

We may even go so far as to impugn the very assumption that common sense is really "common" to the great majority of people. We may make the discovery that in more than one phase, common sense is not common but *one of the rarest gifts of humanity*. The only common sense which is common is that relating to instinctive drives. In fact common sense may be the *missing link between reason and instinct* about which controversy has been rife.

Applied to primitive situations involving past experiences, common sense is really universal. Even children, and animals for that matter, inasmuch as they keep away from fire or can avoid danger, may be invested with common sense. Similarly, common sense will be evinced in the matter of food, so that the restaurant which serves fairly good food at a reasonable price will be patronized to such an extent as to be crowded at meal times. I hardly think that suggestion or imitation enters in except negligibly; for deterioration in the quality of the food or an unwarranted increase in the prices will bring about a drop in the clientele. In money matters, too, common sense is widespread because of the powerful acquisitive instinct functioning strongly in most individuals, although the lack of experience, excessive greed, superstition, a narcissistic ego, and numerous other factors, which are brought into the game, will often dilute the dose of native common sense and lead to reverses.

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Similarly women, because of their traditional status and perhaps biological constitution, display a greater amount of common sense in the field of marriage than do men.

It may be regarded as fairly proven on the basis of countless observations that women in the daily routine of life are more sensible than men. The results of tests which I had given a number of Radcliffe and Harvard students several years ago tended to corroborate the general impression, although these tests, by no means, as the wide publicity in the newspapers unfortunately heralded, bespoke a greater intelligence in woman than in man.

As we leave these elementary levels of food, money, marriage, etc., and approach the more complex situations in life, particularly those in which we have little experience, we feel as though we were soaring into new altitudes where the air is so thin that we can hardly breathe. It is there that our common sense must be put to the touchstone; and it is there that this supposedly common possession is found wanting.

### COMMON SENSE IS RARE

If we are in doubt as to the rareness of common sense, let us visualize a large assembly of heterogeneous elements, or, better still, the United States Congress. Surely those elected to office, either to the House of Representatives or to the Senate, must be endowed with a fair measure of intelligence, as American psycholo-

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gists define the term, *viz.*, adaptability to new situations. Many of the legislators have tried their hands (no innuendo intended) at many things successfully, and yet whenever a bill is discussed and voted on, it is evident that at least some of that august body are not particularly representative of the common sense class. At best we may extenuate the statement by saying that while common sense belongs to all of them, there have entered into the weighing of a certain measure so many extraneous factors and prejudices, that the original quality has been warped, all of which, of course amounts to the reduction of common sense to a minimum.

We may ask in all seriousness: Was the Volstead law in keeping with common sense? Would this world-depression have come upon us if common sense were really common? Is the crime situation an indicator of common sense? Thousands of other both momentous and less consequential questions may be posed in this connection. The replies point invariably in one direction. The international situation in the last few years is proof positive that there is more wrong-headedness in the world than common sense.

Wrong-headedness is not the same as lack of intelligence. On the contrary, many wrong-headed people are extremely intelligent. They will always be one move ahead of you. They will see possibilities as probabilities, and probabilities as likelihoods, only because these possibilities are not accessible to the average person. Their wrong-headedness is an attitude to which

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they are inclined from birth and is therefore not restricted to one or two situations. If they succeed, it is in spite of their failing, and either because of their expertness in some special line of work, or because of a talent which is not affected by their wrong-headedness.

They are well-meaning people who always find themselves on the wrong side of the argument. Some lawyers who are constantly piling Pelion upon Ossa in order to make out a good case out of a clearly unfavorable one belong in this category. In the same way, certain physicians will overlook the simple diagnosis for the elaboration of a complex theory.

The peculiar thing about it all is that these people are not stupid. Judge Webb and Ignatius Donnelly certainly cannot be charged with lack of intelligence, yet these two good people spent a great deal of their time trying to prove that Francis Bacon was the author of the works commonly ascribed to Shakespeare. In this class is to be included the fine humorist Mark Twain. These men are intelligent enough, but overzealous. It seems as if in their pity for the weak or defenseless, they are bent on defending the less plausible.

Naturally why should they be partial to the reasonable? In their experience that which seemed improbable, turned out to be a fact, hence they have taken it upon themselves to mother the unlikely, the fantastic.

You can spot these good people easily. They are leaders of the opposition very frequently. Their fads in food and dress, their extravagances of opinion in

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everything outside of their own field, and sometimes even in their own sphere — are too patent. Romantic souls these are — Sir Galahads of the unreasonable, not knights *errant*, but *erring* knights who have a soft spot for the imaginable, although (or perhaps just because) they are not themselves imaginative.

They have not keen minds but super-keen minds. They elaborate on a detail and neglect the whole situation. A coincidence to them is more significant than an orderly sequence of events. They make discoveries where none are, and carry a strong appeal to those of their fellow-brethren who are similarly inclined.

What a pity they have elected the wrong side! The right side is too tame for their enthusiasm. As a rule these people are destitute of the aesthetic. Their life is passed in a matter of fact routine, but the romantic vein craves expression, and it finds an outlet in weird speculations, in building up sensational theories and in sponsoring one fad after another that is brought to their attention.

Let us remember that many of these excellent men reason well, and exhibit a fund of information often astounding to their readers or listeners, but one quality they lack woefully — and that is insight. Their blind spot makes them incompetent as educators, scientists or enlighteners.

After having eliminated the various misconceptions and after separating common sense from intelligence, which is generally defined as adaptability, we are in a

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position to tackle the concept of common sense more directly.

### ESSENTIALS OF COMMON SENSE

Common sense, as I see it, is a *mental set* which enables us to lay out the facts and perceive the relations, at the same time keeping out prejudices and biases, propaganda, and other evil spirits which befuddle the mind. Like the mystic adjuror of old, who would draw a circle on the ground, and, by his adjurations and incantations, hold the Devil back of, and away from, this sanctified territory, the man or woman of common sense maps out the field of operation and allows nothing but relevant facts to enter this field. The actual drawing of the conclusions is not necessarily the function of common sense. What insight is with regard to one's *personal* relations, common sense is with regard to sizing up *non-personal* relations. Common sense is thus more fundamental than intelligence.

Finally, the essence of common sense is *objectivity*, even where proof is impossible; and it is here that the term common sense justifies itself. The truth of an undemonstrable fact will be adjudicated by the *consensus omnium*, but each human endeavor under which a given fact falls will have its own little world of judges.

It is to the comparatively few in the respective branches of human civilization and culture that the task of deciding on the merits of the case is put up; but then, comparatively few constitute the majority in



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that particular field. We need never fear lest the majority of musically-minded people will set up some modernist of today (let us say Stravinsky or Schönberg) above Bach or Beethoven. Nor will the most vociferous Dadaïst or Surrealist succeed in winning artistic common sense on his side, despite the enthusiasm of spasmodic critics here and there.

The core of public opinion, when shorn of its prejudice, propaganda, imitation, suggestion and ignorance, is common sense. It takes time before the genuine core crystallizes itself, but it finally settles and goes down in history as the *judgment of posterity*. There is no higher tribunal that one can appeal to than the purified and refined product which forms the common sense of society. In this process of crystallization, many changes take place. Some reputations fall by the wayside, others are retrieved, but common sense prevails in that the results of individual investigators are weighed and accepted or rejected in the light of the facts.

The staunchest admirer of Francis Bacon will not be able to restore to him his pristine position of glory among philosophers. *Per contra*, a hundred Tolstoïs will be of no avail to shatter the reputation of Shakespeare as a literary genius. For more than a century, Spinoza was neglected as an infidel and philosophical eccentric, but the common sense of philosophers (and philosophers are not devoid of common sense, the general view notwithstanding) would not allow the name of the great Dutch Jew to sink into oblivion. Instances of such ups and downs on the cultural exchange are so

plentiful that a book on the subject would not be amiss. But unlike the ups and downs on the stock exchange, the common sense judgments on figures of history, once they have been established, change but little as time goes on.

The history of music offers numerous examples of the plodding, yet sure, course of common sense. The story of the restoration of Bach to his proper place affords us a pathetic insight into the scarceness and slow progress of common sense, but suggests also in cheerier prospect its eventual crystallization and triumph.

Even the terrible catastrophe which has befallen Germany at present and which might be regarded as the greatest blow to common sense that the world has sustained in many a decade (not barring the World War) in that a gang of irresponsible men have been allowed to seize the helm of government and make a madhouse out of what was the most highly respected country in the world — even this blunder on the part of a large portion of the German people, while reducing naturally the common sense coefficient of this somewhat narcissistic nation, can be understood and to a certain extent made allowance for (dire want, *ressentiment* feeling, intimidation, propaganda). Nevertheless, common sense will come into its own all too soon for the Swastikites, even in Germany!

Chapter II

COMMON SENSE AND SANITY



## II

### WHAT IS SANITY?

"Sanity" belongs to the category of terms that every one knows a good deal about until a definition is requested. We talk about *sane* views, a "safe and *sane*" Fourth of July, a *sane* measure, as if the meaning of "sane" were to be taken for granted, as if Macaulay's proverbial schoolboy were conversant with all the nuances of this significant word, and yet no sooner should anyone — even the formidable college professor — be asked to explain, let alone define "sanity," than the groping fingers would reach out for the embarrassed occiput.

In tracing the turns and windings of a concept, we can hardly do better than follow the method of the great Stagirite who began with the popular notion of even such an abstract and baffling word as "good." We, living two thousand years later, may even go back as far as the time when words were coined in the Indo-Germanic languages and receive our cue from the primitive lexicographers and terminologists who quite often astonish us with their good sense and comprehension.

### APPEAL TO ETYMOLOGY

Etymologists tell us that the word *sane* is derived from the root *SAN*, "to be healthy," which is the basis

of both the Latin *sanus* as well as the German *gesund*. The very word "healthy," which is not immune from scrutiny in our philological search, is cognate with "hale" and "wholesome," both being derived from Old High German *heil*, meaning *whole*; and to add the Semitic slant, we may note that the Hebrew word טָמִים (Tamim), which represents our "sane," also originally means *whole*. In other words, in our multi-millennial rondo, from the early beginnings of language to the bifurcated rule of slang and psychological lingo, the import of sanity is to be "all there," or, more dignifiedly, to be "integrated." The ancient Romans knew it; the Biblical Hebrews professed it, and the bellicose Goths assumed what we have now come to consider the *vis viva* of sanity.

There is safety in numbers, and the more agreement, from independent sources, with regard to a view, the greater likelihood is there of the view being at least plausible, if not acceptable. But really, after we have come to this point in our inquiry, *viz.*, that sanity is simply soundness, and soundness is wholeness—in other words, "without anything missing," we have reached the end of our journey and find ourselves in a *cul-de-sac*; for the notion of physical soundness, in spite of the too often misinterpreted slogan "*mens sana in corpore sano*," is not altogether analogous to the concept of mental sanity; for while it is true that many diseases are caused by some lack of substance in the organism, and while imbecility or amentia is decidedly the result of such deficiency, it would scarcely do to suppose

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that the behavior we judge as not-sane is due to the fact that "there is a screw missing" in the upper chamber of the individual in question. Perhaps eventually it will be discovered that some indispensable chemical ingredient of the nervous system has been on the wane in such cases, but there is certainly nothing to warrant such an assumption at present, even if allowance be made for the underfunctioning of certain glands.

### THE JURISTIC ANGLE

It is clear that we must start on a new tack, perhaps that of contemplating the contrast between sanity and insanity. The insane have always received more attention from the man in the street than the sane; and although insanity is a negative term, it seems to be the centre of reference for sanity. We are tempted to say that all those are sane who are not insane, *i. e.*, whose conduct is not strikingly peculiar. And what is the standard by which the conduct is judged? It is here that we strike the real snag. The law professes to know how to apply the touchstone. In this department of human endeavor, jurists glibly speak of "reasonable care," "*compos mentis*" and other such phrases. Psychiatrists have given up using the term so that when one of the alienists at a sensational murder trial was asked by the bumptious district attorney to tell the court the meaning of criminal intent in connection with insanity, the psychiatrist snappily and disarmingly answered "I don't know. You tell me."

## *Psychology of Common Sense*

It is the jurist who decides that "every man is presumed to be sane and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his crime" (*State v. Klinger*), and it is the jurist again who pronounces that

Sanity is not a disease to be diagnosed by an expert, but a normal condition so commonplace that its existence in one attracts no attention from another member of the human race. No better foundation should be required for the opinion of a sane person of normal intelligence affirming the "sanity" of another than the facts of adequate opportunity for observation and the absence of symptoms or manifestations which attracted his attention or impressed themselves on his mind or memory. (*State v. Lyons*.)

We shall have occasion to ascertain later if the adjudication of sanity is so simple a matter, or whether, indeed, the procedure of the law itself definitely falls under the category of sanity in this manner. In a sense, the law took precedence over psychiatry. In healing, no grave issues were involved. No line needed to be drawn between the sane and the insane. The borderline was determined inductively by the behavior of the individual. The law, however, was under obligation to define the boundaries of responsibility after the act was committed, hence responsibility became almost a synonym for sanity, while the criterion, *viz.*, that of not attracting any attention, becomes hopelessly inadequate and circular in actual practice. It is a working criterion, however, applicable in the majority of cases, though



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occasionally a serious question crops up which demonstrates the futility of juristic philistinism.

If the legal approach antedated the psychiatric treatment of sanity and insanity, let it not be lost to sight that this subject rests properly in the domain of psychiatry and psychology, the one starting with insanity as its sphere of observation and stopping at the threshold of sanity, the other beginning with the normal individual and ending with the abnormal. And just as the law found it comparatively easy to handle the subject, just so difficult was it for psychiatry to orient itself in this uncanny region of the mind.

We must not forget that after all, it is not much more than a century since the father of modern psychiatry, Pinel, dramatically and effectively for all time, removed the chains which fettered the wretched inmates of the Salpêtrière and the Bicêtre, as well as, indirectly, of all the other asylums (or rather dungeons) in Europe, thereby, together with his no less renowned successor, Esquirol, setting a pace for the humanitarian movement, which was to spread so as to include rabbits and squirrels, let alone cats and dogs as beneficiaries. Before his time, and even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, prisoners were accorded royal privileges as compared with the unfortunate mental patients; and the theological conception of insanity which figures so much in the New Testament, growing to a formidable height of absurdity in the Middle Ages, when madmen were regarded as inspired prophets and saints, while hysterics were looked upon as possessed by

the Devil and not infrequently burnt or hanged — this demoniacal conception was still holding sway in the nineteenth century among psychiatrists of the calibre and standing of Heinroth (1773-1843), who believed that insanity was merely the wages of sin.

What a wide gulf there existed between the sane and the insane even fifty years ago! Almost as great as that between the quick and the dead. Gradually the chasm became narrower. Among the early pioneers of the growing branch of medicine to be called psychopathology was J. L. A. Koch, who gave us *Die psychopathischen Minderwertigkeiten* in 1891. While hysterical patients were exhibiting their antics before a beguiled master (Charcot) at La Salpêtrière, Koch, in his own sanitarium, was devoting his attention to the study of the milder disorders — the psychoneuroses, the "psychopathic inferiorities," which he described so graphically. The world was no longer to be divided into sane and insane people. There was to be a *tertium quid*, a class of maladjusted individuals who could not be regarded as either sane or insane.

The psychological schools of Janet (disintegration) and Freud (unconscious) brought together the normal and the abnormal even more closely. I still remember the perplexity in which I found myself, trying to make out the applicability of the term "disease" to such functions as *memory* and *will*, or the integrated totality we call *personality* (Ribot), and the shock on seeing the title of Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. It occurred to me that Freud was employing

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a metaphor in order to give a striking title to his book; but it was the great merit of psychoanalysis to show this very point, that the sane and the "insane" walk hand in hand, that there is really no topographical border between the two conditions; and that in many of our actions, there lurk symptoms which are cousins-german to the acts of the raving madman, just as in the aberration of the mad Prince of Denmark there was a streak of sanity which fills many a Shakespearian scholar with awe and admiration,<sup>1</sup> and which the wise old fool Polonius apostrophises in the words

How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of.

That all people have within them the germ of a certain type of insanity is suggested by Kretschmer's classification of temperaments into *schizothymic* and *cyclothymic*. It is true that Kretschmer is anxious to explain that "the designations schizothymic and cyclothymic have nothing to do with the question of sanity, but are terms for larger general biotypes," but it is interesting to note that whereas, in the past, the insane were studied in the light of the sane, there is now an attempt made to turn the tables, and apply terms to the

1) J. Conolly, *An Essay on Hamlet*, and T. L. Davis, "The Sanity of Hamlet," *Journal of Philosophy*, 1921, vol. XVIII, p. 629 ff.

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ordinary run of humanity which are of a distinctly psychiatric coloring, even if our author warns us that "the words, then, do not indicate that the majority of all schizothymic persons must be psychically dissociated and that the majority of all cyclothymic people are subject to periodic fluctuations."<sup>2</sup> Certainly we cannot help gathering, at least, from the use of such nomenclature that, though not subject *now*, every one is susceptible, under adverse circumstances or in declining years, of, on the one hand, turning schizoid or, on the other, falling into alternate spells of depression and elation.

From our preliminary inquiry, we have gained this result then, that insanity and sanity are not *toto coelo* different from each other, that the insane are not possessed, that they are not governed by some supernatural agency; nor are the sane always rational and well-considered in their actions. In fact, between the ideally sane and the markedly insane, there are all kinds of gradations, the one merging into the other like the shades of the spectrum; and just as the sun will bring out various hues in the prism, so circumstances will elicit various streaks of not quite sane behavior from us at different times.

Even so, however, even though the gap between sanity and insanity has become smaller through the perspective of modern research, even though there are glints of the one flashing through the other or eddies

2) E. Kretschmer, *Physique and Character*.

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of insanity running through the sane stream — as Robert Louis Stevenson says in *The Wrecker* "Every man has a sane spot somewhere" — the fact that we still employ the terms contrastingly would argue for a fundamental distinction. Forsooth, we do differentiate the two in our estimates of people, and, therefore, it stands to reason that we must be guided by some criterion. What then is this criterion? How do ordinary people know when they are dealing with a sane or an insane individual?

### THE SANE AS THE NORMAL

The *naïve* seem to presume that the insane suffer mentally, just as the sick are considered to be ill because of their physical pains. This view is too puerile to refute. Abnormality perhaps stands out for the man in the street as the chief characteristic of the insane, so that every deviation from what he considers to be natural to do under the circumstances would strike him as a symptom of insanity. If an otherwise dignified man, let us say a professional or a college professor (especially the latter, as he is already foredoomed in the eyes of the tabloid readers) were to take it into his head to walk on the edge of the curbstone, he would immediately be regarded with suspicion, and should he happen to live in a small hick town, his fate would be sealed. His name would always be greeted with "Oh, X. Y., yes, he's a bit cracked, poor fellow!" Or let us suppose that an experimental psychologist, for the sake of an experiment in social psychology, were to pro-

duce a spectacle that would attract the curious mob. Would that scientist stand the chance of retrieving himself ever afterwards even among his own set? Just like the thrifty Norman in Maupassant's "A Piece of String," he would never be able to convince his fellows what the real object was of his behavior, and he would probably be so tormented that he would die of mortification, if not from starvation.

It is just as true today in the age of Babbitts and "red"- (or "white"-) baiters, as it was in John Stuart Mill's generation that "the man and still more the woman, who can be accused of either doing 'what nobody does' or of not doing 'what everybody does' is the subject of as many deprecatory remarks as if he or she had committed some grave moral delinquency."<sup>3</sup> Nor is it the content of the fad or the taboo that is at issue; for when the majority veers from one extreme to the other, every member who is non-conforming has something to contend with in his or her social sphere. Thus a woman will now be eyed askance if she refuses to smoke, in the same way as her grandmother, fifty years ago, would be condemned for using tobacco, except that the former was a hussy then, while her descendant is now being looked upon as a prude or a prig. In either case, "there's something the matter with her."

Normality is a term which in itself requires explanation. We are just as apt to be asked: What is normality? as: What is sanity?

3) J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, chapter III.

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### CONCEPT OF NORMALITY

The question as to what is the normal has now for many years been a perplexing one. William James strikes directly at it in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*,<sup>4</sup> and Kronfeld, in a recent book, points out three more or less unsatisfactory uses of the word:<sup>5</sup> (a) deviation from the average, (b) ethically ideal or socially adaptive, (c) conformable to law.

It occurs to me that the stumbling-block consists in the extension of a term valid enough in the biological sphere to a realm in which it must be governed by different criteria in order to enjoy its significance. A pathological condition is abnormal even if it strictly conforms to natural law because it is plainly to the detriment of the individual. The same pathological condition in the individual may not be abnormal at all when viewed in the light of the vistas which this illness has led to. For the individual, Luther's experience of illumination was symptomatic of a morbid state; for mankind, inasmuch as it led to greater individual freedom in thinking, it was wholesome, and nothing wholesome can be thought of as abnormal, or as other than sane.<sup>6</sup> Viewed from the standpoint of the organization of the Roman Catholic Church, his open heresy was

4) W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 15.

5) A. Kronfeld, *Das Wesen der psychiatrischen Erkenntnis*, pp. 425-436.

6) Cf. also James's significant utterance "For aught we know to the contrary, 103 or 104° Fahrenheit might be a much more favorable temperature for truths to germinate and sprout in, than the more ordinary blood-heat of 97 or 98 degrees."

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certainly an abnormal feature of his behavior, and on more than one occasion was he charged with being the victim of the Devil. But who today would be so rabid as to entertain such an opinion of Luther's conduct and state of mind?

It is usually taken for granted that society knows what is beneficial for it, what would lead to the progress of mankind; but that is just the point yet to be proven.

### DIFFERENT SPHERES OF NORMALITY

As I view the situation, *normality in the accepted sense* as adjustment or adaptation is a quality which is applicable in *restricted spheres where values are not involved*. We are within our rights to consider a bodily temperature of  $105^{\circ}$  abnormal, because such a condition has always been known to go with illness, and while conformable to natural law, it is in effect the cause of discomfort, pain, and eventually death, and therefore abnormal, inasmuch as it is deleterious to the organism. The indications are clear both subjectively (introspectively) and objectively. If, however, an organ should function differently in a certain individual than in all others, without showing any ill effects, the only sense in which the word abnormal could be applied here would be in that of being different from the average — really the schoolboy view of normality.

Now it matters little whether an individual's act will be designated as normal or not in this sense. In fact,



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if anything, this type of abnormal behavior might be matter for elation and emulation. But can we really, in any significant sense, hold a person to be abnormal for not thinking as the majority does and acting consistently on his belief? The answer would certainly depend on whether the conduct in question harms anyone directly or not. It is decidedly abnormal to entertain murderous views, but is it abnormal to reject the sanctity of certain political or religious dogmas or to dispute the desirability of certain institutions or customs? It might indeed have been abnormal to show evidence of rank dissension, were one opinion held by all intelligent people throughout the ages on such matters, just as in respect of theft, lying, robbery, hypocrisy, cruelty, rape, etc., but the *counting of heads in a given age or society cannot determine the absolute normality of a certain type of behavior*, and for that reason no one should be condemned as *lacking in character if unable to adjust himself to his environment*.

### EXPLANATION OF "ABSOLUTE" NORMALITY

I am aware of the novelty of this phrase. I mean by "*absolute normality*" *a quality attaching to behavior which, in the course of ages, will be adjudged as reasonable*. Vision is the great determinant of absolute normality. With the man of vision, the present is extended into the future, and circumstances are transcended by the towering rock of ages — Reason. No one, of course, except a prophet can foresee what might be thought

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right a thousand years hence, but the man of vision will be able to sense the direction which reason is bound to follow; for its course is *orthogenic*, and what relapses it does suffer are all confined to definite localities and periods, and to the masses, but do not apply to that *great commonwealth of thought which knows neither time nor place* — the commonwealth constituted by the great minds in philosophy, who seem to be united at least by the uncommon bond of tolerance, no matter how divergent their views may be in metaphysics, religion, or other spheres of human endeavor. If counting heads is a valid method of evaluation, then the heads should be those of the intellectual leaders and not of the general run of humanity at a given age, the rank and file of society.

If the distinction between relative and absolute normality is accepted, then sanity might correspond with absolute normality, according to which suicide, under limited circumstances, as in the case of agony from an incurable disease, would in spite of the legal attitude, be considered sane, while warfare, though receiving the sanction of the church and the government, is, except in absolute self-defense, decidedly insane behavior into which many sane persons are forced by a senseless bureaucracy, abetted by an unscrupulous press and a timid clergy.

It is scarcely necessary to state that a defensive war is not in this category. In fact, there is a time when determined pacificism is an abnormal attitude in the sense that it is not reasonable.

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### SANITY AS ADJUSTMENT

We have seen that sanity has nothing whatever to do with what is commonly regarded as normal. The concept of "absolute normality," on the other hand, is not a suitable court of appeal, until its underlying criterion is established. Meanwhile it behooves us to examine other proposals.

From the mental hygiene quarters and neurological circles there is wafted the suggestion that all are sane who can *adjust themselves to their environment*. The maladjusted and malcontents do not evidently come under this category. Social workers are quite carried away by this idea, and nerve specialists belonging to that school imply that if you don't need their help you are sane, but if you do need them, though you may not really be insane, you are, at any rate, psychoneurotic.

As one of the spokesmen of the mental hygiene or adjustment school expresses it in a popular little book:

Sanity measures not only the mental, but the physical *and* mental, qualities that enable a person to face critical situations in life successfully, and not merely to sit down and think about them. Sanity is a successful, and insanity an unsuccessful, attempt to adjust life to reality.

From still another angle sanity may be said to be the capacity to find adequate expression for man's creative energy in some one of the great fields of human endeavor. Man is an energy-producing machine, and the energy produced should not be wasted, but be discharged through channels that lead to productive work, and accom-

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panied by a reasonable degree of satisfaction of human desires.<sup>7</sup>

The *rationale* of this doctrine seems to be that when an individual is adjusted, he is happy and the equilibrium of society is less likely to be disturbed than otherwise. In another connection I have had occasion to deal with this type of philosophy.<sup>8</sup> Here, let it merely be pointed out that "adjustment" is devoid of significance unless a standard is supplied; secondly, that it is the upheaval in society rather than its equilibrium which makes for progress; thirdly, that the most useful people were the great malcontents who could not adjust themselves to conditions such as obtained in their day; and fourthly, that if sanity consists of the capacity for adjustment, pigs must be eminently sane, for assuredly they are better adjusted to their lot than most men and women; and finally, if there is any point in the epigram: "Truly contented people are found only in asylums," are we not bound to conclude that only among the insane can one discover a few sane people — a *reductio ad absurdum* of the typical Euclidean sort. Certainly, it cannot be denied that the *derangement itself, in many cases of extreme anguish, is a mode of adjustment* which supplants the frightful suffering by a state of euphoria; and if happiness is the goal of sanity, then the elated lunatic, well provided and cared for in a state institution, is not short of this mark.

7) S. Paton, *Signs of Sanity*, pp. 2-3.

8) A. A. Roback, *The Psychology of Character* (3d edition), pp. 510-526.

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### SANITY AND INTELLIGENCE

The insane, of course, are dependent, cannot exercise their duties or attend to their tasks intelligently, hence another factor may be introduced, *viz.*, that of intelligence. Shall we say then that intelligence constitutes the core of sanity? We should concede, perhaps, that no truly sane person could be other than intelligent; and furthermore, I should even go so far as to maintain that intelligence, in the strict sense of the word, implies sanity in the making, but unfortunately the term intelligence as understood and defined by the majority of psychologists would not answer the purpose. If to be an intelligent person is to be a Jack-of-all-trades, a successful salesman, an efficient foreman, a clever demagogue, etc., then I, for one, withhold my assent to the proposition. On the other hand, intelligence as the capacity to discriminate between right and wrong, true and false, genuine and spurious may well serve as a guide to sanity, as we shall have occasion to see presently.

That sanity overlaps and interpenetrates with adjustment, normality, intelligence and what is commonly referred to as common sense, is probably indisputable. The question is whether it shall be regarded as a synonym of any of these terms. Our brief analysis has shown that such identification is not warranted, that there is an ingredient in sanity which is lacking in these other terms. Naturally every one who officially represents one of the social sanctions will bring to bear

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the authority of his sanction on the problem. For the clergyman, sanity is realized in religion; in other words, the most deeply devout individual will be the most sane. The artist will find that sanity gushes out of art alone. When Schopenhauer bade us drown our *Weltschmerz* in art, as he himself so well succeeded in doing, this thought was probably at the back of his mind. The philosopher, and especially the logician, is quite certain that sanity, when you reach the rock bottom, is of a dialectic order, while the jurist is almost offensively assertive about the legal essence of sanity.

*Lex est summa ratio insita in Natura.*

### THE SANE AS THE RATIONAL

At this juncture, the reader may begin to sense a tendency, so prevalent in modern flippant discussion of fundamental notions, to break down barriers and to demolish the very possibility of a standard which may help to gain a clue to the subject. But this is not my purpose. Every serious-minded person must recognize that there is a line of demarcation between the concepts sanity and insanity, and the different modes of behavior they represent. To determine the *quale* of this cleavage is the object of our inquiry.

Let us, therefore, see whether we could not establish some constructive criterion of sanity, which will meet most requirements.

To begin with, it will be maintained here that there are three rubrics under the generic term sanity, *viz.*,

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sanity, insanity and non-sanity, the order of distribution, among the population, following the order in which the categories are mentioned. In other words, a minority of people is sane, the majority is non-sane, and the remainder is insane. The *sine qua non* of sanity is rationality. The earmark of insanity is, accordingly, as is fairly well known, its irrationality, to the point of incoherence. What is not generally believed, however, is that over half of civilized humanity and an even larger percentage of the uncivilized world (education must be reckoned with as a factor) are not rational in their behavior and thought (opinion) more than half the time, whether through ignorance or through a blind spot in their personality which affects all their acts and judgments, and is the cause of their prejudices and biases. The present world situation is only one instance of the condition here described.

But what is rationality? Unless some attempt is made to analyze this term, we are no farther ahead than before. Let us then assume that to be rational is to form judgments that are objective, that are not marred by personal prejudices, and therefore are apt to represent the true situation. Often the measure of such objectivity is its crystallization in time, after the event has taken place, but occasionally it is not necessary to wait that long. Just as the reward of virtue is virtue itself, so the measure of objectivity is objectivity itself. The genuinely objective person is quite aware of this, and his judgment and acts will be concurred in, under the circumstances, by other rational people.

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There is scarcely any delusion in the insane which does not occur in a modified degree in the ordinary *homo sapiens*. Millions of men and women blame their stars, their luck, their fate, their ancestors, their parents, their employers, partners, neighbors, etc., for their own faults; millions are penny-wise and pound-foolish; millions will stand in line for hours in order to see a reproduction of a scene where one man pummels another until blood flows, and will pay out a week's wages for the privilege of witnessing the original combat; millions will read motives into actions that were never intended by the agent. There are the sensitive people whose skins are so thin as to be pricked by their own fancies of insults. There is the type of individual who will gorge himself with food *ad nauseam*, simply because it would be a pity to waste it, especially when somebody else was paying for it. And then how many are there afflicted with the old maid's delusion, in the supposition that every glance in their direction is an indication of love, although they may be more discreet about expressing it than are inmates of an asylum? Or take the case of your inamorata who, regardless of the thousand and one proofs of devotion you have given her, will flare up and accuse you of indifference and fickleness because you have forgotten to bring some magazine you promised to show her. Or the senseless and annoying rackets which a great many are in the habit of making, the unnecessary movements and contortions sometimes symbolizing acts or processes that are not too appetizing. But why multiply illustrations?



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It would require a sizeable volume to list all the manifestations of irrationality in some form or another; the phobias, abulias, delusions, tantrums, misconstructions, negativisms, compulsions, obsessions, etc. Even the sanest of the sane are subject to it at times, but there are at least over 70 per cent of the people one observes every day who are *addicted* to irrationality; and scientists and educators are no exceptions, as witness those who were coaxing the editor of a biographical dictionary of scientists to affix an asterisk before their own names, so that they might enjoy the glory of being counted among the distinguished, or the famous *savant* who so objected to being identified with his race in a certain reference work that he actually resorted to the law courts.

At first blush, it appears rather presumptuous to indict humanity in general as non-sane, yet there is nothing new in this. The French Moralists, Pascal, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, and Molière, even Montesquieu (in his *Lettres Persanes*) have already insinuated this conclusion, but it was reserved for the novelist, Flaubert, to emphasize the irrationality of polite society, let alone the lower strata, by undertaking his unique *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (which was unearthed among his manuscripts only in 1910, and published in 1913) and his collection of startling extracts from famous authors (for the most part, absurdities). In this dictionary, which was a more deliberate attempt to expose the stupidity of man than he had done in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, he merely set down a number of trite reactions, as he observed them, on the

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part of the contemporary middle class, to general notions, such as *Summer* — “always exceptional;” *Divorce* — “Napoleon would still have been on the throne if he hadn’t been divorced.”

Unfortunately Flaubert himself, though inherently sane, acquired something of a sophomoric contempt for the foibles of the *bourgeoisie*, and was too greatly hampered by his own inhibitions to make more than a mere attempt at the systematic elaboration of his original plan. These inhibitions in themselves are a detraction from Flaubert’s sanity, since sanity presupposes a *co-ordination between the cognitive and the volitional faculties* (functions), but had he lived today, he would not have to expend at least so much energy in collecting the ineptitudes of his times. Compiling a list of the “Remarkable Sayings” by notables, printed weekly in our publicistic journals, or the nuggets of wisdom contained in the addresses of big and little dictators, would fully have answered his purpose; and what a *Catalogue des idées chic* it would make!

### SOCIAL SANITY

There is a belief among the masses that no individual leading a retired life can be sane, that it requires society to fashion it. Let us not discuss the sanity of the mob, for we might as well refer to the intelligence of the idiot, but the sanity of institutions is hardly ever questioned; and of all the institutions, the law has been accepted as the *fons et origo* of sanity. It is true that we

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have also heard the dictum "The law is an ass," but that saw is attributed to cynicism.

### SANITY AND THE LAW

In an ideal sense, the law must be envisaged as sane, but laws are framed by individuals — and these have their prejudices — and are administered by a machinery composed of people who are even less prone to discharge their office rationally than their legislative colleagues.

It was in the name of the law that thousands upon thousands of innocent martyrs were hanged, burnt, quartered and tortured in countless ways. It is for the sake of law and order that two men who were guilty only of holding views opposed to the government were electrocuted, in the face of a protesting intellectual world, headed by Albert Einstein. In California, Mooney and Billings would have met the same fate, were it not for the intercession of one of the sane men in his generation, Woodrow Wilson; and in spite of the overwhelming mass of evidence demonstrating beyond a shred of doubt that the two workingmen were "framed," one of them was released after 22 years of incarceration, only thanks to the pledge of a politician with character, Governor Olson of California, while the other still languishes in jail, the victim of hate and chicanery.

The "sanity" of the law may well be instanced by the fact that an old woman in Illinois, selling a pint of liquor, was given a life sentence as a recidivist while

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three fiends who, in addition to a previous criminal record, wantonly killed two youths, after taking two dollars from them, and raped their girl companions in a half-dying condition, afterwards stoning and burning them in their last agony, received no greater penalty for their ghoulish deeds than the poor woman selling liquor. The direct result of the conflict between the reactionary and the radical trends in our legal system is that the mild offender and the extreme degenerate are given an identical sentence.

### **PATHETIC INJUSTICE**

A case which must have impressed the critical observer even more than the foregoing was that of Desatnick, a young milk driver of Boston who was found guilty of drowning his four-months-old-infant, and was convicted as an accessory before the act, although he protested his innocence. Suppose we assume that he did cause the death of this tiny creature, but under what conditions? It was brought out at the trial that the child had been conceived before he and his wife were married, that some of his relatives hounded and nagged him about bringing an illegitimate brat into the world, that he, at his wits' end, decided, not without consulting his wife, that it would be best for all concerned to do away with the child. The destroying of life is, at best, a brutal act, but the circumstances in this case, the motives, the provocation, the attitude toward very young infants in Desatnick's

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circle all went to show that the *lex talionis* would be an enormously unjust rule to apply here. The young man was not a criminal. On the contrary he had been devoted to his wife and — alas for him! — excessively dutiful to his mother. There was not the slightest likelihood of his ever committing another crime against a person. Other than in that one very unfortunate respect, he conducted himself like the average law-abiding but human citizen. The death of the four-months-old infant girl was a tragedy for him and his wife only. No one else missed her. She herself probably was spared a good deal of unhappiness, and was not yet sufficiently aware of her surroundings to realize what was happening to her. Under the circumstances a five- to ten-year sentence would have been ample enough even on a retributive view of justice. The sentence was death, the supreme penalty. The law would have its course. What did death mean to the four-months-old babe, and what did death mean to the father, the son, the husband, the friend, the self-conscious individual? Seven rabbis pleaded with the Governor, as did the young wife and mother of the victim, but the chief executive of the state was adamant; and all my efforts to discover the reason for this severity failed. The doomed fellow met his death, as reported in the newspapers, heroically.

Just before his execution, the only man who was executed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts since 1830, as an *accessory* to a crime, penned three letters, one to his parents, a second to his wife, and the third as

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a message to the country's youth. These documents are so human, so pathetic and are so instinct with kindness and charity that I cannot help reproducing them to show how a fundamentally good man can hardly hope to receive clemency from officialdom for a misdeed, while conscienceless gangsters who commit the foulest murders cannot be brought to book.

The following paragraphs are quoted from a Boston newspaper (July 17, 1928):

In farewell letters to his parents and wife, Nathan Desatnick, who was electrocuted Tuesday morning for the murder of his infant daughter, asserted his innocence and asked that his other child be taught to say "Kadish," the Jewish prayer for the dead, for him, it was revealed yesterday when they were made public.

In the letters Desatnick bade a fond farewell to those near and dear to him, extended his thanks to the Jewish chaplain at State prison, as well as to the warden, deputy and other officers, and disposed of his estate.

In his letter to his parents the doomed man said in part:

"At these sorrowful moments while I sit and wait praying to God all the time for His help and salvation, I want to beg of you, my dearest mother and father, from the deepest part of my heart and soul to be kind to my dear wife and unfortunate little baby that was not old enough to say 'Daddy' to me.

"I want to beg of you not to take things too much to heart, as you already have lost enough strength and power on my account.

"I know you have done all and more than was possible for me and to save my life. But what can we do? Our hearts and souls are in God's hands and He takes you whenever He wants to, and He is taking me now.

"My dear mother and father, you have been true folks to me and therefore you must be brave and be a

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good father to my dear brother and sister that I leave behind.

"I do want to thank you for what you have done for me from the beginning of my life until the end.

"I am also thanking the Lord above us that I am dying an innocent man as I have never committed any crime. I thank the Lord for everything he has done for me. (Amen)"

"To My Dear Beloved Wife and Babe," the second letter was addressed, and read, in part:

"First of all, dear, I want to tell you that you have been a true and loyal wife to me and I want to thank you, sweetheart, for all you have tried to do for me. I know very well that you have gone through for me more than any other wife would for a husband.

"Now, dear, I want to beg of you when I go to please let my folks see the baby as often as possible.

"I want to beg of you, when baby grows up, please teach her how to say 'Kadish' for me, as I want to have somebody say it once a year."

After the electrocution of Desatnick this morning, the following letter, addressed to "Jewish Young Men and Women," which he had written in the death chamber was made public:

"At this sorrowful moment, while I am sitting in the death chamber at Charlestown, I can't help expressing a few of my thoughts in writing, in regard to my terrible condition that I am about to face in a few hours.

"One little mistake on my part got me into a great mess of trouble. I have been ashamed of my illegitimate child that I did not want to take home, and I had it boarded out at a stranger's house. The shame came to me through the gossip of my neighbors and disrespectful talk against the illegitimate child, and in giving this child to place in a Jewish home in New York till the gossip will die down.

"That stranger sent my child to death, and for this murder I am blamed and paying the extreme penalty. This case is to teach us all not to make little mistakes and that when a little mistake has been made we must try to do right by the innocent child in spite of gossip of the neighbors and the shame that goes with it.

"No matter what little wrong we do or sin we might commit, we must try soon to repent and improve our

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ways quickly; if not, an insignificant sin will lead into serious sin, as the scriptures tell us. One sin draws another, another and another until we are terribly entangled and pay for the sin with serious sufferings.

"I have always been a good boy and always supported my father and mother and wife. As the people know me, I was a good character. And yet because of a little sinful and careless action, without thinking of consequences of such action, see and behold what I came to.

"Let my terrible sufferings be a warning to others who might be careless. Be good Jews and Jewesses. Keep and practice the teachings of the law of God spoken by Moses and the other prophets of Israel; and in my hour of trial I have learned that in keeping of the laws of God there is peace of mind, long life, happiness and honor, Amen. The unfortunate man."

NATHAN DESATNICK

If the Desatnick execution has been dwelt on as exemplifying the non-sanity of the law or of its administrators, it is just because there is no halo of martyrdom attached to his death, so that, unlike Sacco and Vanzetti, as in many similar cases both before and after him, he and his suffering are apt to be overlooked, and the law will continue to pride itself on its *summa ratio*.

It is an irony — this time not of fate — that in the same state just as the year 1939 was to begin, a man with a criminal record of armed robbery and a goodly variety of other serious crimes, who was serving a three and five years' sentence to run concurrently (on previous occasions, for various reasons he was acquitted) was paroled after 83 days' imprisonment. No wonder a visitor from Scotland said to me in connection with this leniency toward a recidivist, "It is surprising that they did not grant him a pension." Yet this convicted robber received more than a pension; for



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after being paroled, he married a girl of a good family of whom the Governor of the State thought very well, and together with her went on a prolonged honeymoon to Florida, after which he was to be set up in business.

On the other hand, a hungry boy stealing a piece of lead pipe from a large concern is meted out a stiff jail sentence.

Soon after the sensational parole of a proven public enemy, a talented and refined pianist who, in a fit of irrationality, incidental to an unfortunate romance, pointed a toy pistol at a woman stranger in the movies, found herself faced with a ten years' sentence. Truly one might exclaim, "Your ways are inscrutable, O, administrators of the law" !

The law, which makes no provision for indemnifying a man who had been innocently rotting in a prison for years because of corruption at his trial, the law which allows a man who has deserted his wife, wealthy in her own right, to come back after she is dead and inherit her fortune, is of the same texture as the indiscriminate and philistine custom of condoling with and honoring the widow who by her constant money demands and mismanagement, nagging or other deplorable conduct, sent her overworked husband to an early grave. The tendency of custom, tradition, etiquette, or institutionalized decree is to take the lines of least resistance, to look *at* instead of looking *into* a situation, to view superficially instead of analyzing the causal train of events in order to see whether there might not

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lurk a contradiction in the projected course of action, whether we are not defeating the very purpose of our good intentions.

There is no point in admitting that we have many useful and reasonable laws. In my *Behaviorism and Psychology* I had this much to say about the law in general:

The law ranks as one of the most conservative institutions known to man; and justice is woefully lacking in its administration. But if this institution has been behindhand with regard to the findings of science and progressive thought, it has always managed to preserve the core of human conviction in its slow but sure advance. What distinguishes jurisprudence from ethics is the fund of practical, though philistine-born, social sense in which it is rooted as contrasted with the refined but unverifiable theories, and salutary but unenforceable maxims of the moralist.

What I am questioning now is the sanity of certain legislators, administrators of the law, and the public which allows some nincompoop statutes to become law and to remain on the books. I have yet to find a good excuse for the statute that no alien may serve alcoholic drinks in a restaurant; and as to the Teachers' Oath Law, what good can be said about a measure which purports to weed out communists but in reality strikes at the men and women of principle while a communist finds no difficulty in remaining on the teaching staff or even in being engaged as a teacher in a first class

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university? Do legislators not see that intimidating a militant radical by a Teachers' Oath Law is like barring a cat's exit by placing a ladder on the threshold of an open room?

There is a far cry between the non-sanity of some of our American laws and the criminal insanity of the Nuremberg laws, but that does not by any means invalidate the thesis that the *summa ratio* is to be found elsewhere than in the sphere of concrete law, such as we know it.

### DOES EMINENCE IMPLY SANITY?

There is too much of an inclination to attribute to the successful in some one field of endeavor the quality of sanity. This is a mistake, as we already have learnt from the connection between insanity and genius. While not going as far as Lombroso and his school in their attempt to make out of every extraordinary talent a madman, at least in embryo, I should not hesitate in accepting the negative implication of the proposition; that genius and sanity are not *necessarily* related. The philosophical and scientific geniuses, with very few exceptions, were eminently sane — and that applies even to Nietzsche, who later became insane. Some of the literary geniuses belong to this class, Shakespeare and Milton for instance; while others like Blake, Swift, Cowper, Tasso fall distinctly into the second category. Similarly, composers like Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Brahms, Mendelssohn cannot be grouped with Beethoven, Wagner, Berlioz, Chopin or Tchaikovsky. Nor

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can there be any generalization made in any of the other fields of achievement.

It is most *naïve* to suppose that a legislator, because of his election, a statesman even of Bismarck's calibre or a president of the stature of Roosevelt (the reference is to Theodore but may apply to Franklin D. too) must have been outstandingly sane or else "he could not have been where he was." In the case of some of them, it may be, as Francis Galton, himself a conservative investigator and more considered in his conclusions than Lombroso, declared: "Great men may be even indebted to touches of madness for their greatness; the ideas by which they are haunted, and to whose pursuit they devote themselves and by which they rise to eminence having much in common with the monomania of insanity." Of the majority who have risen to high office we might say perhaps with Hamlet

*And praised be rashness for it; let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our dear plots do pall:*

Thus, it may dawn upon us why our laws are not more sanely conceived. The essential qualities of climbing up in the world do not include rationality. Hence the many miscarriages of justice, the countless hardships which fall to the lot of strangers, immigrants or just tourists — and it is not sufficient to compare the United States with other countries. Undoubtedly we are better off here than in most European states, but there is still much to complain of; for our human rela-

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tions are nowise distinguished by sanity. Hence, the protective tariff measures (whom do they protect?) and the farcical Prohibition Amendment which gave rein to license and inflated the market for crime. The unsuccessful attempt, on the part of a sane ruler, to prevent the farce by his veto, demonstrated once more the truth of Schiller's dictum

*Mit der Dummheit kämpfen Götter selbst vergebens.*

### POSTERITY — THE JUDGE

Whether in the council-halls, at peace conferences, or at cabinet meetings, it not rarely happens that the sane counsel is rejected because an aggressive personality will have his sway; and the common belief that two heads are wiser than one is in practice seldom realized, simply because it is not always the wiser that succeeds in persuading the less wise. There is perhaps more truth in the saying, "One man can see better than a hundred", for his vision will not be warped by the vociferous distortions of the many. Let this, however, not be regarded as an argument, or even an apology for dictatorship.

Many of us have been wondering how enlightened judges, clergymen, leaders of their community could bring themselves to allow innocent people to be hanged because of allegations mainly by hysterical children that they had been mentally harmed by the accused. E. W. Taylor, writing on "Medical Aspects of Witchcraft", cannot refrain from dwelling on this puzzle in connec-

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tion with the Salem witch trials toward the end of the seventeenth century.

As he aptly points out:

The attitude of the judges and others mainly concerned in the prosecution also offers a problem of speculative interest. The natural sense of justice which these persons presumably had in other affairs of life was for the time wholly submerged. Evidence was accepted at the trials which marked them as the most flagrant travesties on the doctrine of individual rights. No defence was allowed. The accused was prejudged and the outcome was assured. The presumption of innocence until guilt be proved beyond reasonable doubt found no place in the procedure. All this, it would have seemed, must have outraged the sense of fairness of men of recognized integrity of character, but such was not the case. That even so powerful a motive as religious fanaticism should have misled men like the Mathers, one of them the President of Harvard College, Judges Sewall, Stoughton, Richards, Winthrop, Danforth, Governor Phips, and Rev. John Hall, when it conflicted so obviously with the recognized rights of men, in an ordered community, must remain one of the perennial riddles, until perchance some medical philosopher of broad vision may find the solution. One must go far below the surface of ethical or religious theory to reach a proper understanding of this strange psychological phenomenon, no less pathological than the performance of the 'afflicted children.'<sup>9</sup>

9) A. A. Roback (Ed.): *Problems of Personality*, pp. 185-186.

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It will not take another two centuries before psychiatrists, sociologists and psychologists will be pondering the type of mind which, although belonging to noted judges and presidents of two of the greatest educational institutions in the country, could be so obdurate in the face of the facts as presented by eminent scientists, jurists and public men as to cause the electrocution of two Italian radicals instead of recommending a life sentence to make room for a vestige of doubt. Nor can it be said that the jury serving on the case or the governor's commission, in whose hands the fate of the two men had been placed, were in a position to know the particulars or had access to more of the data than the galaxy of outsiders who studied every wrinkle of the *cause célèbre* and arrived, as one man, to the conclusion that Sacco and Vanzetti were not murderers.

But after all, when the distinguished Harvard Professor, Barrett Wendell, exactly two centuries after the execution of the Salem "witches", solemnly asks us to believe that the "culprits" were worthy of the noose on the ground that they had probably indulged in hypnotism, ("whether some of the witches may not, after all, in spite of the weakness and falseness of the evidence that hanged them, have deserved their hanging"<sup>10</sup>), why is it not possible for some distinguished New Englanders, even five centuries hence, to maintain stoutly that "in spite of the weakness and falseness of

10) B. Wendell: "Were the Salem Witches Guileless"? (*Hist. Collections Essex Institute*, 1892, vol. XXIX. Cited by E. W. Taylor in "Medical Aspects of Witchcraft", *loc. cit.*

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the evidence" that sent Sacco and Vanzetti to the electric chair, they deserved their burning because of their anarchistic views.

That sanity is a *proprium* neither of intelligence, *i. e.* intellect, nor of the capacity for achievement has been fairly well established by crucial, if not numerous instances; for sanity, contrary to common opinion, is a comparatively rare attribute. In the first place, it *contains the warp and woof of rationality, but in addition it presupposes emotional stability and an impulse to carry out one's convictions*, although not necessarily to reform the world, which is already a step in the direction of character.

### GENIUS IN FIELD OF COMMON SENSE UNRECOGNIZED

There are by far fewer sane people than intelligent ones. Sanity presupposes intelligence and education, but there are millions possessing both intelligence and education who are nevertheless wrong-headed, because of some quirk or kink in their nervous system, because of some attachment, some complex, some phobia, some mental "tic." A peasant, in his restricted universe, may act more sanely than a premier or chancellor in his sphere. We are sometimes astonished at the good sense exhibited by an ordinary artisan or tradesman, just as we are often perplexed at the blunders, at the floundering in the morass by some of our statesmen for whom the phrase "muddling through" has now become a standing adjunct.



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The long list of egregious mistakes which began with the *laissez-faire* policy in the far East as well as Ethiopia, and culminated in the Munich betrayal of Czechoslovakia should prove conclusively that those at the helm of the government are no more endowed with sanity than the person piloting a ferry boat, and that in this regard, Main Street may compare favorably with Downing Street.

Far from sanity being the property of the majority of mankind, it is to be discovered in relatively few; and there is no reason to ascribe it to any greater number of individuals than are endowed with genius; that is to say, there is a *genius relating to sanity* just as there is one relating to music, painting, literature, etc. Since, however, sanity does not lead to achievement and therefore to fame, many an outstanding, though not recognized, individual in this field, in the sense that he will be able critically to evaluate every situation which crops up, without prejudice or bias, will remain "inglorious" and "mute." In their hamlet or village they will be looked upon as wise counsellors, but their influence will perhaps not go beyond their little circle of neighbors.

### THE SOUNDS AND THE SURDS

Let us now pick up the thread of the classes into which all human beings with intelligence will be placed. We shall leave out of our account the imbeciles, since rationality must invariably be at the root of sanity.

It goes without saying that the inmates of mental

hospitals, as well as their more fortunate kind who are kept in private sanitariums or at home, will be excluded from our review. Nor can the delinquent be considered sane; for anyone who can hope to elude the long arm of the state over a stretch of years, and is ready to court danger, anxiety, hounding, etc., which in themselves undermine the organization of the nervous system, for such gain as could be obtained with the same amount of effort in a legitimate manner, cannot properly be regarded as rational, no matter how cunning or crafty the criminal may be.

Now, in the United States with its 130 million inhabitants, after deducting the two million imbeciles and several million morons (*i. e.*, those adults whose intelligence is not much above an average ten-year-old child's); 500,000 delinquents, including the 60,000 who are estimated to be at large, and half a million insane or nearly insane people; we still have a large population from which to draw our moiety of sanity. We are willing to make room in this larger class even for the fifteen million dupes who are the prey of all sorts of quacks, charlatans, bogus stock promoters, badger games, matrimonial bureaus, mystic cults; the "suckers" who devote their life to divers fads and hobbies with more rhyme than reason to them — we can afford to be so charitable as to make all of them eligible, at least theoretically. But when it is our turn to scrutinize the general run, *i. e.*, the average, more or less, of any country, we are struck by the fact that their beliefs or opinions, their affections and sentiments, their

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aspirations, their conceits and actions manifest certain mental quirks which make their behavior incompatible with the sanity standard set down in this chapter.

Either there is a subjective slant on every subject, which injects the ego in nearly every judgment, or else the *judgment may be sane enough but a barrier intervenes between the right thought and the right act.* There is an incoördination between the two. It is these people that constitute the large division of humanity who either are always in trouble themselves or else are ever making trouble for others. It is from out of this category that the neurotics are recruited. In fact, we may say that they comprise the neurotic class. These individuals, I should designate by the name of *surds*.

### HISTORICAL CHARACTERS AS EXAMPLES

Just as in mathematics, there are human *surds* of the quadratic, cubic, and higher, *i. e.*, more complicated, orders. The more complicated they are, the more interesting they are to study, but the more unfortunate they are in their living. Their irrationality gives rise to misunderstandings, breaches between themselves and their friends, maladaptations and misery of one sort or another. Some of them are sane enough to give good counsel to others, but themselves they cannot help. Jean Jacques Rousseau was one of the most celebrated *surds* in history — a paradox or rather mosaic of paradoxes personified. Certainly there were many geniuses whose conduct was more fatuous, whose eccentricities

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were more marked, and whose life-form was more puzzling to their associates and biographers, but the strangest part was that in him there existed, side by side, a remarkable sagacity and a perverseness of mind which did little credit to his name. Voltaire, on the other hand, except for a certain moral irrationality, belongs to the other side of the scales, the *sounds*, while D'Alembert and Diderot may be cited as *true* examples of *sounds*.

Among the great *sounds* in the annals of literature, philosophy, science and statesmanship are Julius Caesar, Montaigne, Bacon, Shakespeare, Galileo, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, and Hume. Of course, there is no objective measure for ranking these giants of mind; and there may have been many lesser lights who, were we conversant with all the details of their life, could be shown to parallel, if not surpass, the sanity coefficient of the great *sounds* just enumerated; for as already intimated, there is no significant correlation between genius and sanity. The *sound*, in contrast with the *surd*, is well aware of his purpose in life, and uses direct means in order to gain his end. He has his conflicts, but he is acquainted with their source. He is never at fault but that he learns to avoid the same pitfall. While the *surds* will be frequently moving in a circle or else, like the beetle, will struggle on their back for a long period without being able to turn to their normal position, unaided, the *sounds* will always extricate themselves from difficulties because of their accumulation of experience and utilization of ready discharge centers.

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### DYNAMISM OF "SURDITY"

The *sounds* live more on a *conscious level*; the *surds* are steeped in the *subconscious* or in the "unconscious" of the psychoanalysts.

Most of the Freudian mechanisms are true of the *surd*, who represses far more than the *sound*. Hence the psychoneurotic symptoms, the conflicts and inconsistencies, which do not come out into the open. *Surds* are greatly affected by fixations due to experiences in childhood. *Sounds*, while also subject to fixation, pass through their stages of evolution without undue emotional lingering.

If *surds* were to follow their instinctive bent, they would escape a good many of their trials and troubles. It is when they attempt to graft on to their instinctive foundation a logical superstructure that they find themselves wielding an instrument which is too subtle for them. It is then that their "surdity" becomes most apparent; their acts are disjointed — out of kilter with the situation in hand. Thus it is that they will strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, rush impulsively into a matter of great consequence and spend hours deliberating whether to shut the window or not, whether to make a social call or not, something which would not give the *sound* a minute's thought. Similarly, the *surd* will be over-polite to one who does not deserve it, and act rudely toward the very ones who are themselves genteel. He will make a mountain out of a mole-hill,

and yet brush aside a serious occurrence, as if it were a matter for a child.

It may perhaps be — and this is only a conjecture — that the *sounds* make use of their new brain in a more adjusted manner than the *surds*, who have not yet been able to master all the intricacies that have been won for their cerebrum by a million-year course of evolution, and therefore encounter difficulties in the coördination between the new and the old brains. One reason why some animals get along better than some people is that the dumb brutes make no effort to manipulate what is beyond their reach, while the human *surd* finds himself under compulsion to compete with others who are biologically in a better position, and they make a botch of their endeavors because they are applying somebody else's method (devised by a highly delicate cortical machinery) to the performance of an ordinary task which, in the absence of the necessary equipment, should be carried out crudely. As well might a bear be expected to use a slide rule in making a lair for himself and his family as a *surd* analyze the motives and behavior of the *sound*, or attempt to reach the same mental status. Thus, when the French physiologist, Richet, in a comparatively recent book, spoke of humanity in a most depreciative way, rating it as regards self-management below animals, he was referring particularly to the misuse of intelligence by non-sanely constituted men and women.<sup>11</sup>

11) C. Richet: *L'homme Stupide*, p. 17. "On s'étonnera sans doute qu'en comparant l'animal à l'homme je trouve constamment l'animal moins stupide. Et, en effet, à un premier examen superficiel, on serait

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### PHYSIOLOGY OF SANITY

We are still on the threshold of the subject. What produces sanity and what causes non-sanity? Freud explains it by repression of early experiences; Adler attributes it to a certain style of life and family conditions, but we are not told by either why one child should be able to keep from repressing or should sublimate more effectively than another child or why one individual should have been more susceptible to a nervous breakdown than another who has been subjected to similar, if not absolutely the same, circumstances. There are millions of only children, millions of first-born, millions who have been born second in the family. Do they all, because of their order of birth into the family, develop similar inferiority feelings? There is evidently a *constitutional* factor which explains the disparity in behavior, style of life, character trait, reaction-formation, neurotic symptoms, emotional imbalance, disintegration or what-not.

The sanest of the sane have their weak spot, their little irrational twist, which is grounded in a certain nervous organization and comes into being on a particular occasion. Whoever has not had the opportunity of studying his consciousness at a time of transition between the rational and irrational phases? It may have been a silly anxiety. The transcendentalist, incurable

tenté de croire que l'intelligence de l'homme est incomparablement supérieure à celle de l'animal.

"Mais il faut s'entendre. Stupidité ne veut pas dire qu'on n'a pas compris, mais qu'on agit comme si l'on n'avait pas compris."

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idealist that he is, knows perfectly well that there is no reason to fear or worry about some unfortunate event which has only one chance in a million of occurring. Yet the next moment, the thought that perhaps this will be the one time when fate will be against him works him up to the degree of frenzy. He asks an expert about such a possibility and he is assured that there is not the slightest likelihood that the thing dreaded will come to pass. His fears are allayed; yet soon after, he begins to doubt the judgment of the expert or his good faith. Perhaps the expert wanted merely to quiet him, and again he is thrown into the throes of anxiety. A hearty meal, perhaps a stimulant in addition, will calm our pessimist and calamity monger for a short period; and then some casual remark made bearing on the case, some meaningless omen, will again lift him from the *sound* level to the *surd* depth; and so the process goes on until the problem solves itself or a complete collapse takes place.

Now, if we had access to the mental and physiological processes during such a hectic state of consciousness, we should know a great deal about the *modus operandi* of sanity and non-sanity or even insanity. It is not the mere thought which occurs to the individual that determines his frame of mind, but the conviction attaching to the thought. The thick-skinned Bœotian in this case will not manifest any irrational tendency, although he may be generally a *surd*. The sensitive introvert, on the other hand, is already afflicted with a guilt-complex to begin with, a self-torturing mechan-



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ism, and the least deviation from his high standard will be apt to release this mechanism. The physical condition and suggestions from within or without steer this mechanism (which will be recognized as the *super-ego* of psychoanalysis) one way or another, until it attains its balance.

### TYPOLGY OF SANITY

Unfortunately, with the many variables in the complicated human machine, it will be a long time before experiments could be conducted so as to follow the various steps physiologically in the sanity-non-sanity-insanity development. What we may hope to do is to study the correlations of certain behavior in those we regard sane and those we may dub non-sane. The problem will be to ascertain whether sanity is a function of one personality type as against another; *e. g.*, whether the introvert or the extravert of Jung's classification, whether the Basedowoid or tetanoid "eidete", whether the phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine or melancholic temperament, whether the individual governed by the primary function or the secondary-functioning person, whether the thyroid-centred or the pituitary-centred personality is given to sane behavior.

Now it is difficult at this stage to suggest any theory. On the basis of personal observation, I should be inclined to rank the phlegmatic and the melancholic temperaments above the choleric and sanguine for sanity, the individual possessed of the *secondary function* (*i. e.*, one whose mental processes are not transient but

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persevere and affect succeeding states) above the *primary functioning* individual (one who is affected by momentary impressions thus developing a broad but shallow consciousness). Furthermore, it would be reasonable to expect a greater degree of sanity in the introvert than in the extravert; and, if the endocrine personalities are to be brought under discussion, it will be safe to bet on the ante-pituitary as against the post-pituitary, thyroid, or adrenal personality. From descriptions of the Basedowoid and the tetanoid types of eidetic imagers, we may judge the latter to be more favored in this respect.

As to whether the schizoid or the cycloid type is the saner, I am afraid to pass an opinion. It must be realized that each of the types has its own virtues and defects, so that it would be possible to make out a case for any one of a series of types, but if an *index sanitarius* is established by having, let us say, a group of ten highly educated persons judge the behavior of different individuals, in addition to the testimony gained from the individuals themselves with regard to the mistakes they made which they could have avoided — then while the melancholic type, *e. g.*, might attain an average of .7, the sanguine type would perhaps yield an average of only .6, it being understood that perfect sanity would be represented by the unattainable integer.

### SANITY TESTS

There is no doubt in my mind that in years to come, a series of tests will be worked out to prove the relative

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sanity of "sane" individuals. The question of *insanity* will not enter into those tests at all. While it is true that all intelligence tests are at the same time a measure of sanity, it must be recognized that in the first place, intelligence is only one feature of sanity, and that common sense and insight are more properly akin to sanity than is intelligence as understood by the majority of testers; secondly, it should be borne in mind that the chief characteristic of sanity, *viz., acting on the soundness of the judgment* is the most difficult feature to test, unless actual situations are devised along the lines of the character tests ingeniously worked out in recent years by a number of American investigators.<sup>12</sup>

### SANITY AND CYNICISM

There remains yet a word to be said with regard to the relation between sanity and cynicism. One finds in certain sophisticated quarters a tendency to see an affiliation between the two. Only the professional *exposeur*, the muckraker, the wisecracker, he who finds nothing good in the world, who jeers at the values, denies the very possibility of standards and lumps the genuine and the spurious, the true and the false, the good and the bad, all in one dumping heap — only that type of individual is considered to be sane or sound in his views, naturally by others of that stamp, and their

12) Comprehensive surveys of such testing will be found in G. W. Allport's *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* and P. M. Symonds' *Diagnosing Personality and Conduct*.

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number is increasing in our tabloid, filmy, jazzy, and swinging (in more than one sense) civilization.

Certainly this is not the viewpoint adopted in this essay. A *sane* person must entertain *sound* notions. His outlook on life must be *wholesome*. The three adjectives italicized are inseparable. A wholesome person is neither a jaded, *blasé* cynic, nor a strait-laced, repressed vice-hunter, but one who is just a little more advanced than his contemporaries in his ideas and yet evinces a sympathetic regard for the aims of convention, thus effecting a compromise between himself and society. Wholesomeness, too, is a general attitude, not to be estimated from one instance, or even from one sphere of conduct. Oscar Wilde's unwholesomeness did not consist in his inverted sex practices, but was rather the expression of his lack of solidity. His epigrams were turned out for the sake of cleverness just as a liar throws out statements for the sake of expediency. There is no foundation to either. Neither is a personality but a chameleon in human form. Wilde's wholesomeness dates from his confinement, in Reading jail, when he began to say what he actually felt. Another example, although perhaps of the reversed kind is that of G. B. Shaw, who began his career as a wholesome beacon in a sea of dreary tradition, but later in life became so overpowered by his own ego that his witticisms could no longer be taken seriously; they might, for all we know, be the utterances of a robot or a cute child. The ring of sincerity no longer issues from them. In his pen-foe, Chesterton, we find an equal deviation

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from sanity, though in another extreme; for almost no matter what the issue, this super-philistine and arch-Mediævalist is sure to be on the wrong side.

In brief, despite the assonance between the two words, sanity and cynicism, there is no connection whatever between them. A cynic is not sane, to begin with, because he expected far too much in the first place, and finally conducts himself non-sanely because having failed of his purpose, he imagines that there is no purpose, and that everyone else who is striving for something is either a fool or a knave. Their temper seems to be characterized in the lines of Shakespeare:

*Poor wretches, that depend  
On greatness' favor, dream as I have done;  
Wake, and find nothing. But, alas, I swerve.*

The "vanity of vanities" motive is assuredly a justified element in the symphony of life, but only a single element. When it becomes the whole of the music it is no longer a legitimate endeavor; it has turned into a caterwauling. The philosophy of sanity would imply that even if all were illusion, the illusion is something real which has had its place and has served true interests. Both the philistine and the cynic are equidistant from the source of sanity, and in one more instance do extremes meet.



Chapter III  
COMMON SENSE IN SEX





### III

## SEX IN DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

We have traveled far in the exploration of sex regions since Eve ate of the fatal apple, and Adam knew Eve, and the Sodomites sought the angels, and Onan inaugurated the birth control movement, etc. We have traveled far, but have we moved in a rectilinear direction or has our progress been of the circular type, which seems to be characteristic of the advances made in more than one human endeavor, particularly in connection with human institutions?

To be sure, there has gone on of late a steady diffusion of sex information, in spite of the prurient prudes and senseless censors, so that we have often heard it said that the boy of today knows more than his father, and the adolescent girl can, at least theoretically, give a few pointers to her mother in regard to the mysteries of "life", but we shall have occasion to look into this boast or plaint anon. Certainly it must be conceded that the public mind, if there be one, is more alive to sex problems than the same hypothetical mind was, let us say, fifty years ago. Even an Anthony Comstock, were he alive today, with all his kicking could not stem the surging tide of the ruffled subconscious sea within us.

To be interested in a thing, however, is not necessarily to possess knowledge of that thing. The subject,

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I make bold to contend, is still surrounded with a mist; and as for the masses, they are still fed on the superstitions of bygone ages. It has been thought that in sex education, practice makes for enlightenment, that the knowledge gained is at least a compensation for the innocence lost in the experience, but even this general belief cannot be accepted without qualification, for anthropologists tell us of whole tribes for whom, so far as they are concerned, all conception is immaculate, in other words, they have not reached the level of grasping the connection between the mating act and the birth of a child.<sup>1</sup>

### THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

I have mentioned the twentieth century, as if the age or era had much to do with the understanding of such matters. On general principles, we might have expected that the progress of sexology would proceed *pari passu* with the great strides in science as a whole. But there is the key to our problem. Just because "all

1) If the statement that "over the greater part of the continent [that is, Australia] the father's share in procreation is not known" (*The Family among the Australian Aborigines*, p. 179) should be interpreted in a more sophisticated sense than the one intended, we may have recourse to several of Malinowski's other books such as *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, where we are told (p. 109) that "the natives have no idea whatever of the fertilizing influence of the male semen, but they know that a virgin cannot conceive, and that to become a mother, a woman has to be 'opened up' as they express it," and *The Father in Primitive Psychology*, where we read "I received a great number of similar declarations all expressing the view that the way must be open for the child, but that this need not be necessarily brought about by sexual intercourse . . . But once opened up—in the normal course of events this is done by sexual intercourse—there is no need for male and female to come together."

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roads led to Rome," Rome had to be guarded most vigilantly. Thus all religious, social, and political influences converged in the direction of keeping sex within its dam, always in danger of breaking down, and at times actually bursting and allowing the pent-up waters to overflow on neighboring territory.

At the same time, there was never a period in history when sex has not played a predominant rôle in the shaping of cultural productions. In its protean disguises, it has percolated into the very sphere of religion, even if we do not take the extreme and one-sided views of Kempf and Schroeder, who see indications of sex activity in every nook and corner of civilization. Sex has had its votaries, its apostles, its poets and reformers, but it is no exaggeration to say that the scientific approach to the study of sex has only begun in the twentieth century.

### THE FIRST ADVANCE

Books on sex under various titles there had been aplenty for at least a generation, but it was not until Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* appeared that the whole tissue of sham, superstition and old wives' tales had been punctured and a direct investigation of how people behave in this private sphere has been instituted. But Ellis's work, epochal as it was both in its daring and scope, was after all only *descriptive*. The author had brought together a vast amount of information, and as a result of his gleanings had opened new vistas before a philistine world. His great

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asset is a critical appreciation, or rather depreciation, of mere conventions. The revolt of the prophet marks this monumental labor, which may be regarded as a veritable encyclopedia on sex matters, in the broadest sense.

On the other hand, Ellis did not have the rigid training and discipline of the scientist necessary to exploit the mines which he had come upon. His sources, especially the personal ones, were of a casual nature. He had to get the accounts from whomever he could. Similarly, in his citation from books and articles, he followed the anthropological method in vogue at the time and pursued by cultural explorers like Westermarck and Frazer. The result was that Ellis supplied us with valuable ore but the forging of the metal was still to be accomplished.

However, even if Ellis had only called attention to the fact that there is a *psychology of sex*, not merely a physiology of the reproductive organs, we should have been beholden to him for his achievement. He it was who bridged the gap between the pathological manifestations of sex, which Krafft-Ebing had studied so assiduously, and the normal phenomena of the fictitious average person.

In academic circles, in the lecture halls of Leipzig and Würzburg, of Berlin and Sorbonne, the connection between sex and psychology was dimly sensed. At most its exposition was confined to the mention of sensations from the genital organs, and the discussion in a general way of the sex impulse or instinct. The laboratories

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were too busy producing after-images and difference tones of the second and third orders to bother about such a complicated affair as the sexual phase of man.

To all intents and purposes, the world was divided psychologically into two classes, consisting of those whose sex tendencies ran the regulation course and those who gave evidence of a craving for a variety of sex experiences, which would immediately brand them as perverts, as being drawn to the unnatural. Morally, of course, the dichotomy was between the chaste and the lewd, but one can tell at a glance that the above "psychological" division was prompted by moralistic considerations. This was the pre-psychological stage of the study. Very few persons until recently were in a position to judge otherwise.

There were of course the physicians, specialists of nervous and mental diseases, who were conversant with the sex problems of some of their patients, but only rarely did they gain any insight into the matter. In his historical sketch of the psychoanalytic movement, Freud<sup>2</sup> reflects on the neglect of men like Charcot to link up the particular disturbances with the causes, although at one time the latter, speaking to a few students who had surrounded him at an informal gathering, astonished Freud with the enlightened utterance "*mais dans des cas pareils, c'est toujours la chose génitale, toujours . . . toujours . . . toujours.*"

For that matter, priests too have access to many hidden recesses of the human soul, but their task is not

2) Freud: *Collected Papers*, vol. I, p. 295.

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that of the investigator. To them merely *weaknesses* are displayed. The weaknesses require, from a religious point of view, no interpretation. Individual differences, origins, motives cannot be gone into when all mortals are supposed to be saddled with the same temptations, although at different times and under different circumstances. The *dispensation* and not the *malady* or *offense* is all-important under this purview.

### THE DAWN OF DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

It was reserved for Freud to usher in a new era in sex research. No longer was the questioning to be casual or restricted to intellectual acquaintances who volunteered information. Freud came in contact with a cross section of the world, in that his patients represented all classes. The examination on sex matters — whether direct or indirect — through the psycho-analytic method, was a task imposed, and constituted a part of the therapy, hence a flood of light was thrown on this obscure region of human behavior. Who would have dreamt that the *libido* was to play such a dominant part in the interpretation of acts so trivial in their outward manifestation and yet so significant in their symbolic representation? Who would have thought, let us say, fifty years ago that the infant was already capable of reacting to a sexual situation? And, finally, what an advance in conception to note the polymorphous nature of man and to differentiate between the desires or wishes on the one hand and the actual overt behavior on the other!

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From the older view that few people were perverts on the assumption that by far the majority of people were given to a standardized mode of sex response, there emerged the more realistic observation that the alleged normal *tendency* in sex life was, if not a fiction, at least so rare as to come, in a certain sense, under the head of the abnormal. Freud and his disciples dethroned the moralistic illusion which held sway for many centuries. Perhaps that is the reason why the founder of psychoanalysis has been the target for so many puritanical bolts.

### WHAT IS DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY?

The great service of psychoanalysis, however, has been not merely the undermining of a false conviction. Freud did much more. He introduced the *dynamic* note into psychology. He searched for explanations of certain types of behavior. He explored the field of motives. The *how* of the act was subordinated to the *why*, and in the place of a thousand and one detached and desultory observations, affirmed and contradicted in turn by different investigators, Freud has given us a system, a system which may be altogether too artificial or too air-tight, but nevertheless a well-organized body of generalizations that seem to illuminate many occurrences in mental life.

Freud, then, if not *the* founder, is at any rate one of the chief pillars of dynamic psychology, which consists in going beyond the mere facts of introspection, so

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prized by traditional psychology, and *allowing for inference as regards what takes place in the subconscious*. Ordinarily we perceive the mental billiard balls collide, move on, or roll back and then fall into the pockets of the table, but the impact has been imparted to the balls by *some one*. Energy has been expended, and even this energy was preceded by an effort, an intention. All these antecedents were scarcely reckoned with prior to Freud.

In the case of human acts we have, of course, conditions obtaining that could not be ascribed to actual ivory balls. Desires, wishes, purposes, motives, intentions — in brief, all that goes to make up the basic mechanism of the so-called *drive* — must be analyzed and related to one another. This is the operating center of dynamic psychology, and it is here that it shows its advantage over the Wundtian system, which may be characterized perhaps by the dictum *non est in psychologia quod non est in conscientia*. Dynamic psychology, especially that of Freud's brand, would retort to this "There is more in consciousness and mind than your introspective psychology ever dreamt of."

### THE TRANSMUTATION OF DRIVES

Another feature of dynamic psychology, and one which is frequently lost sight of, is the principle of metamorphosis — the fact that one instinct or drive can be transformed into another. This doctrine is particularly stressed in psychoanalysis, and the concept of



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sublimation is necessarily based on such a presupposition. McDougall also, to a large extent, makes use of this principle,<sup>3</sup> and Morton Prince, in some of his papers, implies it, although neither subscribes to the well-known *ultima transformatio* of Freud. On the other hand, Woodworth apparently questions the applicability of such a principle in any strict sense. Referring to the concept of *sublimation*, he points out that, properly speaking, it should "mean that the tendency toward a certain consummation could be made to drive mechanisms irrelevant or even contrary to itself," whereas, he continues, "there seems to be really no evidence for this, and it probably is to be regarded as a distinctly wrong reading of the facts of motivation."<sup>4</sup>

Yet the general tendency of dynamic psychology is, I believe, to take for granted that one drive changes into another without the conscious effort of the individual; and physiologically such a redirection or diversion of energy is readily understandable. By "changes" I do not mean, of course, that one type of energy ceases and is replaced by another as is the case with, say, electrical or mechanical energy, but that in sublimation, the *libido*, while still operative in its irrepressible and subtle way, evolves, to the "naked eye" at least, something entirely different from its characteristic product. The sex urge, *e. g.*, of the ascetic painter or composer, is not wholly lost even during his

3) Wm. McDougall: "The Sources and Directions of Psychophysical Energy," *Amer. Journal of Insanthy*, 1913, vol. LXIX, no. 5

4) R. S. Woodworth: *Dynamic Psychology*, pp. 175-176.

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creative activity but is exploited by other drives and urges in the interests of society and, besides *providing the impetus* to create, also *flavors* the artistic production. With this qualification, it is, I think, still legitimate to speak of a transformation of the *libido*, referring, in the main, to the different course of the energy and the dissimilarity of the results.

Our metaphor of a billiard ball will, in the light of this metamorphosis, turn out to be altogether inadequate; for the impact of one ball against another does not affect its quality, except after a long series of collisions — and therein lies the danger of introducing physical analogies.

But I must not be tempted to present an exposition of Freud's psychology in this book. It is sufficient to gain a foothold in the subject and to orient ourselves with regard to the bearing of dynamic psychology on the problems, both psychological and sociological, of sex.

What then can we learn from dynamic psychology concerning the *vita sexualis*?

### DIFFERENT CURRENTS IN DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

It has already been intimated that *dynamic psychology* is by no means an integrated whole so that its conclusions would be regulation utterances. Dynamic psychologists are united, indeed, in seeking motives, in analyzing symbols and odd bits of behavior, in accentuating the importance of the affective life and throwing

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into relief the *motif* of the drives, but there exist nevertheless divergent premises and attitudes amongst the leaders of this school, whose views on sex matters are colored by their own particular moralistic, sociological, or religious bias. Perhaps it is scandalous that a psychologist should be swayed by other than scientific considerations. Nevertheless such is the situation, and we might as well take this for our first clue to the study of the conditions.

Every dynamic psychologist evinces a vital interest in the problems of sex, even more so than does the behaviorist, but it is in the actual results and prospects that the differences arise. Dynamic psychology harbors sex radicals — and Freud is not the extremist among them — as well as Puritans, who like McDougall applaud the rigidity of the law against homosexuals<sup>5</sup> and admonish against flirtation, especially in the case of the married.<sup>6</sup> We have, on the psychoanalytic side, writers like Kempf and MacCurdy; and on the *psychosynthetic* side Jung and his followers, who are inclined again to the ethereal and spiritual; while Morton Prince and Woodworth, representatives of different trends of dynamic psychology, seem to steer clear of the question of good and evil. Adler, dynamic through and through in his treatment of human foibles, has become more and more the educator and less the iconoclast of society. Then too there are the sociological and anthropological “dynamists” among whom may be

5) Wm. McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*.

6) Wm. McDougall, *Character and the Conduct of Life*.

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reckoned Flugel<sup>7</sup> and Malinowski. More pronounced still in welding the two branches is Róheim. In fact I should not hesitate to include Stanley Hall "among the prophets," for his magisterial chapter (really a book in length) "The Pedagogy of Sex" in his *Educational Problems*, quite aside from his pioneering work on *Adolescence*, entitles him to a place among the deep probers of human motives.

Without attempting to draw up a list of dynamic psychologists or even of separate factions, I shall content myself with saying that there is not, so far as I can make out, any definite stand among them on the sexual outlook. Many of them, if confronted with a point-blank question as to their findings in this slippery region, will probably consider that they have well acquitted themselves when they have shifted the task to the moralist or sociologist. After all, why should they be expected to pronounce judgment on matters of right and wrong or social reform? And would their *pronunciamentos* have the least effect on rulers and legislators, seeing that the world is constituted as it is, and various deep-rooted agencies and institutions have wielded their cumulative influence for centuries?

And yet the social reformer, or in fact any educated person, has a right to inquire of the psychologist about the data on a sphere of human activity fraught with such consequences as almost to eclipse all other activi-

7) Although Flugel is primarily a psychologist, he has, through his *Psychoanalysis of the Family*, made a noteworthy contribution to sociology, from the psychoanalytic angle.

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ties. There can be no denying that the center of gravity of the average person's life is the sex drive. It may have been absent or in abeyance in the case of a few outstanding individuals, but this does not alter the situation. An admission, therefore, to the effect that psychology has very little to offer in this sphere of mental life is almost evidence of failure. And if the psychologist cannot contribute his fundamental share to the rearing of the tremendously elaborate social structure, then sociologists and moralists have no foundation for their construction work.

But it is one thing to observe that there is no consensus among dynamic psychologists and quite another to say that therefore psychology has nothing to offer in the way of clarifying the burning sex issue. Even here extremes meet at least half way. With all his moralistic bias, McDougall has presented a naturalistically frank analysis of the sex instinct, perhaps to the discomfiture of the American publishers of his *Introduction to Social Psychology*.<sup>8</sup> At least we may infer this from the circumstance that the chapter in question, or, as some would probably put it, the questionable chapter appeared only in one or two of the many editions of the book. This goes to show that a psychologist is a psychologist for a' that.

8) McDougall's "The Definition of the Sexual Instinct" in the *Proceed. of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1914, vol. VII, is also to be mentioned in this connection.

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### AN OVERLOOKED REFLECTION

Freud, on the other hand, is not so sex-bound as the majority of people, and even psychologists, are willing to believe. There are certain significant passages in his works which are apparently lost in the ruck of his writings. Nevertheless, as we shall presently see, they lead us to read between the lines and force us to the conviction that the eternal dilemma has not been resolved in the mind of the psychoanalytic hierarch. Those who would identify psychoanalysis with propaganda for sex license will do well to examine the following statement in the light of Freud's reputation as the inveterate foe of all repression. "It is easy to show that the value the mind sets on erotic needs instantly sinks as soon as satisfaction becomes readily obtainable. Some obstacle is necessary to swell the tide of the libido to its height. . . . In this context it may be stated that the ascetic tendency of Christianity had the effect of raising the psychical value of love in a way that heathen antiquity could never achieve."<sup>9</sup> Of course it is the old story of forbidden fruit, which figures in the proverbs of most nations, but there is a tinge of almost Fichtean idealism in the quoted utterance (the *non-ego* a foil for the *ego*).

Aside from these earnest efforts made on the part of dynamic psychologists to come to grips with the gargantuan question of sex, it must furthermore be pointed out that the persistence and dauntlessness of

9) S. Freud: *Collected Papers*, vol. IV, p. 214.

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Freud and his disciples have been largely responsible for the universal spirit of inquiry which is being more and more manifest today with regard to sex expression. Sociologists, moralists, eugenicists, and the clergy are all eager to face the problems squarely instead of declaring a taboo on them as of yore. The ground has at least been broken, but it will take considerable time before the soil will be made arable. There are almost unsurmountable obstacles in the way of studying the *vita sexualis* at close range, obstacles which have never been fully discussed in all their far-reaching ramifications; and even in this essay I cannot hope more than to treat them in a cursory manner.

### A FEW OF THE PROBLEMS IN SEXOLOGY

In the first place, it is necessary to make an inventory of the problems of sex. There are technical problems, such as may be found in the thousands of books on sex physiology, parading under various names, and there are general humanistic or sociological problems, which may exploit the anatomical, physiological and embryological facts, but should not stress them beyond the auxiliary point; else the means becomes an end, thus supplanting the further objective.

Certain controversies arising out of academic attitudes are at present occupying the fore of the mental sciences, whereas in reality they might easily be disposed of in a paragraph or two. The dispute over the innateness of the drives strikes me as one of these scarcely practical endeavors. I should not like to imi-

tate Samuel Johnson in this respect and assert "We know that there are inborn tendencies and that settles it," but in my review of the voluminous literature on the subject, I have not found any experimental evidence, not even the much-heralded experiments on infants performed by Watson, to traverse the common-sense conviction that not only is the sex urge an inborn tendency but that it also manifests itself in a specific mode of response according to the object which stimulates it. Practically all dynamic psychologists adhere to the instinct doctrine, or to put it more accurately, all dynamic psychologists are of the opinion that there are inborn dispositions, which are modifiable in various degrees. It is the specific phase of the doctrine which is at issue. In the case of the sex instance, the question, *e. g.*, is whether a deviation like homosexuality is congenital or acquired; whether other so-called perversions are, if not transmitted in the germ-plasm, at any rate a correlate of the individual constitution. Behaviorists in general, environmentalists, mechanists and their like, hold that sex attachment is conditioned by previous experiences. I must admit that psychoanalysts overtly argue in favor of this theory, when so much is attached to infantile experiences, but on a more searching analysis we shall be compelled to conclude that Freud regards the natural mode of sex response as fundamentally innate, else why should the parental fixation be invariably between the opposite sex, and not, *e. g.*, between father and son, daughter and mother?

Similarly the true environmentalist, who imagines



that a typically heterosexual person can become homosexual by training, example, or other artificial means; and conversely a homosexual, had he not been subject to unfavorable conditions, would have led a normal life — is under obligation to explain why homosexuals and heterosexuals differ in their physical and mental make-up, and moreover why even homosexuals are attracted to each other on the basis of sex divergence, *i. e.*, the aggressive male homosexual will seek a more effeminate partner, while the delicate girl who develops a "crush" for another woman will invariably select the virago type. In other words, in the single sex camp, there is a division of sex characters, pointing to the inbornness of the specific response.

The polymorphous sex tendencies of most individuals, to be sure, are not to be denied. It is merely my contention that there exist degrees of inclination which may be regarded as negligible and are brought into the open only under extraordinary conditions, or at the insistence of the desire for variety. Again, most of the polymorphous sex tendencies are decidedly of a heterosexual nature, but are condemned by moralists and public opinion (when some one else is involved) because they cannot serve the ends of procreation, and also perhaps for aesthetic reasons.

I have used the topic of homosexuality as an illustration of the problems that have yet to be solved in our study and of the difficulties that attend their solution. Naturally, if a colony could be founded in some place where children were taught homosexual prac-

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tices, and afterwards, when thrown in with those of the opposite sex, they yet showed marked preference for the latter, our argument would be clinched, but we might as well reach out for the moon as hope to have our inquiries settled by experiments the very mention of which is apt to outrage a respectable world.

### THE URGENT NEED OF EXPERIMENTATION

Yet our only salvation lies in well-conceived and properly directed experiments. Notwithstanding the contribution of Freud and other dynamic psychologists, we are still immersed in a sea of legend and folk-lore with regard to the essentials of sexology. Why, the very word *sex* needs analysis. How much of what is ordinarily considered to be sex activity is really motivated by curiosity, or the love of power or conquest, the maternal instinct, compensation for a feeling of inferiority, self-aggression, or even self-submission? Is the Don Juan merely indulging his sex appetite when he samples the embraces of a variety of women? In the same work of Freud cited earlier, there is to be found an interesting comment on the fact that tipplers do not have to change the brand of their wine in order to gratify their craving for drink as do lovers, who soon tire of their sexual objects of love. This pregnant remark might well be pondered by behaviorists to whom sex behavior reduces to mere cutaneous friction or lubricity. If it is not the communion of personalities which counts in such behavior, then frequency, rather than variety, should be the desideratum of every Don Juan.

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### INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The wall of privacy which surrounds the sex life is nowhere so impenetrable as in the matter of individual differences. It is one of those many factual reversals of commonly accepted opinion — was it not Shenstone who said “Mankind have always delighted in believing enormous lies?” — that in the very phase of sexual relationship wherein everyone thinks he or she is different, *viz.*, the courting stage, all but the most ingeniously romantic behave in about the same manner, whereas in the more advanced stage of the relationship, which culminates in orgasm, there is a huge variety of preferences, likes and dislikes, whims and inhibitions — factors that affect the marital bond incalculably; yet, for the most part, these deviations from the legendary standard of sexual intercourse must be inferred from veiled allusions. The well-known resistance on the part of patients to the prying eye of physician or psychoanalyst needs no documentation. The chief contribution to the differential psychology of sex thus far has been made by Havelock Ellis, but his data are meager at best, not due to inadequacy on his part, but to the relative incommunicativeness of his correspondents.

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The mystery of woman is another of these unaccountable puzzles which clearly indicate that we are scarcely at the threshold of that insight seen as funda-

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mental to an understanding of the most vital urge in humanity. Why should woman be the eternal sphinx as if she inhabited a distant star or as if she were represented by only a rare specimen in some *terra incognita*? Fondled by a mother, surrounded by nursemaids and sisters, taught by a dozen or more school ma'ams, schooled by a wife or wives, as the case may be, and perhaps a few sweethearts (pre- and extra-marital) in the bargain, we still keep debating back and forth whether woman is a libidinous creature<sup>10</sup> or a mercenary and calculating adventuress,<sup>11</sup> or both (Weininger). Does woman exhibit no central tendency, or is it that each man judges her in the light of his own personal experiences with her?

The most elementary questions have still to be answered. In a popular article,<sup>12</sup> Katharine Davis presents the results of an investigation showing why so many did not marry. Naturally from the standpoint of the man in the street, this question requires to be dealt with, but are we to take it for granted that we know *why we marry*? Or better still, has there yet appeared a trace of a psychological inquiry (and I am aware of the biological, religious and mystical approaches to this daily occurrence, as well as the embryonic analysis of Max Nordau) into the absurd inequality of life partnerships? Why is it that the man of industry, energy

10) S. D. Schmalhausen: *Why We Misbehave*, passim.

11) H. C. Beers: "Women and the Marriage Market," *Harper's Magazine*, May 1928.

12) K. B. Davis: "Why They Failed to Marry," *Harper's Magazine*, March 1928.

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and initiative will fall a prey to a whining, spineless and supine woman, who far from assisting him in any way, only serves to paralyze his activities, unless he is endowed with extraordinary ingenuity and an indomitable will; and conversely a woman of considerable prowess very frequently marries a ne'er-do-well, who alternately snivels and snarls at the proven capacity of his unquestionably superior spouse?

Whether we are face to face with a cosmic prank, a piece of poetic justice (or rather injustice), or whether to the law of survival of the fittest there is to be added, as a codicil, the phrase "by marriage," we surely are not within reach as yet of the psychological *modus operandi* of this sort of mating. The principle of compensation looms up as a possible explanation; and the prematurely deceased psychiatrist Otto Gross<sup>13</sup> held that first through social selection, and then in the course of things through natural selection, the originally abnormal (subnormal?) inadequate and helpless came to be sought as a suitable mate, but the hypothesis is too general for specific application. In the present state of our knowledge, all one can do is to attest the force of the poet's apostrophe:

*But busy, busy still art thou,  
To bind the loveless joyless vow,  
The heart from pleasure to delude,  
To join the gentle to the rude.*

13) Otto Gross: *Ueber psychopathischen Minderwertigkeiten*, p. 117 ff.

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### A WOMAN'S LAMENT

A thousand and one questions may be put to the student of sex phenomena, and we must not forget that each age, each generation has its own problems, although in the case of evils, the momentum seems to be a cumulative one. Toward the end of the last century, that astute observer of human nature, Laura Marholm, whose book on the psychology of woman throbs with life and is instinct with prophetic earnestness, feelingly asked:

"Whence does it come, this hesitating eagerness, this secret aversion of woman for man, this displeasure of the woman in her sex, this desire to be above and beyond her sex, with which the woman of our day coquets? Whence come her coldness in pleasure and her passion in renunciation? Whence the nervous diseases, soul-sickness, mental disorders, and all the hysterical outbursts of dissatisfaction which prey upon the woman of our day? Why is her charm for man and her power over man so weak and uncertain? Why are her births so hard and her children so often feeble, while all sanitary conditions and the opportunities for prolonging life are so much better than ever before? Why are marriages now so joyless, why is love now so lame of wing? Why are women so much more cowardly than formerly in their sexual life, and 'young ladies' more stupid than ever? Why?

"Still another question: why is all this so much more evident in Protestant lands than in Catholic coun-

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tries? — and why is it precisely in the centers of our highest civilization that people can neither live nor die?”<sup>14</sup>

With the exception of one of her queries, that regarding the greater cowardliness of women in their sex life, all her questions are even more insistent today. How much more this gifted woman, who, writing before Freud startled the philistine world, has expressed herself in a true psychoanalytic vein, would have cause to deplore the situation today!

Unless we are really passing through a transition period (an altogether too long period) and the pendulum will begin to swing back, we can readily imagine what the sexes will have to contend with in the next generation. And until the draw-curtains of the nuptial bed are pulled aside, figuratively as they have been literally, we can hope for little in the way of improvement, despite the sermons of preachers, the surveys of sociologists, the maxims and injunctions of moralists, and the legislation of politicians. Whether the personal reserve, so deeply ingrained by tradition and perhaps also by other more psychological (individual) factors, can be eventually broken, I mean whether we can rely on the veracity of the reports, is something, of course, which cannot be settled *a priori*, let alone the interpretations and conclusions arrived at by the investigators.

14) Laura Marholm: *Studies in the Psychology of Woman*, p. 38.

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### THE NEW APPROACHES

A beginning has already been made in this direction through various research institutions and foundations. Questionnaires, calling for information of an intimate and private nature, have been circulated widely among the more educated classes, but these questionnaires possess their objectionable features from a scientific point of view. Katharine Davis, under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation, has been able to collect a mass of data regarding the marital and the premarital state of women,<sup>15</sup> but one may express misgivings as to the accuracy of the statements filled out. It is my impression that far more value may be attached to a spontaneous expression than to the answers in a questionnaire. A single intimation, a stray hint is often worth more to the dynamic psychologist than a whole series of definite answers. Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* may be thought of in this connection. In their thorough investigation on *Sex and Personality* (1936) Terman, Miles and their associates devote several chapters to controlled but far too condensed case histories of inverts.

The same criticism is applicable to the two articles<sup>16</sup> by G. V. Hamilton and K. Macgowan, in which

15) K. B. Davis: "A Study of the Sex Life of Normal Women," *Journal of Social Hygiene*, 1923, vol. ix. The subsequent book, *Factors in the Sex Life of 2200 Women* (1929) is a valiant attempt to deal with a hitherto proscribed subject.

16) G. V. Hamilton and K. Macgowan: "Marriage and Love Affairs," and "Marriage and Money," *Harper's Magazine*, Aug. and Sept., 1928. These articles are included in the authors' subsequent book, *What's Wrong with Marriage?*



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a survey of the marriage relations of two hundred persons is presented. The investigation discloses a number of interesting facts, but the senior investigator vitiates his research by theorizing and introducing at every turn Freud's theory of parental fixation. This *infantile* view in its pristine form was not so absurd as it became later in the hands of eclectic sociologists and psychologists who took it as an "explain-all" of every conceivable vice and virtue.<sup>17</sup>

The Jews have a saying that you do not cut your finger unless God wills it ("*On Gots viln shneidt men zikh a finger nit ein*"). This fatalism is reflected in the environmental bias of Freudianism, except that your father's or mother's *unwitting behavior* toward you in your early childhood is substituted for God's will; and at least on this one ground, the Freudians are joined by a powerful ally, the behaviorists.<sup>18</sup> The heredity view, at least, allows for an interplay of the environmental conditions to modify the basic dispositions.

### THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND ITS WEAK POINT

To come back to the subject of the questionnaire as a method of investigating the *vita sexualis*, we may conclude that its very control, which otherwise would be an asset, is a drawback, and serves to elicit a mass of

17) Consider how Kempf, in his *Psychopathology*, and at his lead, F. H. Allport in his *Social Psychology*, have made Darwin's achievement as well as his mental and physical distress a function of his mother fixation.

18) Of course it must be recognized that the environmental influence is general and not limited to parental fixation in the behavioristic system of Watson, but the bond which unites the two schools is the stress laid on the experiences of infancy and early childhood.

camouflaged data, which further are distorted by the speculations of the examiners in order to bolster up a cherished theory that had not been scrutinized critically from the standpoint of enlightened common sense.

Undoubtedly the most painstaking research of this kind is the study by Terman and others on *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness* which was published in 1938 after several years of extensive probing. A sample of the findings is quoted here. What after all in the light of the complexity of each individual, the varying imagery, the different intensities of the "desiring" process, the lack of introspection, the probable difference in reserve between the inhibited and the uninhibited — what can a series of statements like the following signify in terms of predictability?

Of the 87 husbands who married without premarital sex experience, 9.2 per cent desire extramarital intercourse "frequently" or "very frequently" as compared with 21.7 per cent of the 92 who had premarital intercourse with "spouse and others." Of the virgin group, 74.7 per cent desire extramarital intercourse "rarely" or "never"; of the "spouse and others" group, only 38.0 per cent. It will be noted that in the case of wives the two variables in question are much less closely associated than with husbands. The majority of wives, whatever their premarital sexual history, report little or no desire for intercourse after marriage with other than the husband. Besides being on the average less passionate than men, women are probably also more prone to take the marriage bond seriously. (Page 340)

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It may be that those who were puritanical before marriage possessed a stronger super-ego or sublimated more or had a weaker sex urge; and that the same causes operated after marriage too. Those who, on the other hand, indulged their desires prior to marriage would be inclined to continue their self-indulgence. And yet we know of many cases where those who have had their fling early in life settle down to a well-adjusted state of monogamy, while others who feel that they have been deprived of varietistic experience, harbor desires of compensation with interest for the lost opportunities, especially when the spouse had not been so repressed before marriage.

The manipulation of questionnaires is proper in more than one sphere, but in the realm of sex, it can hardly take the place of experimentation; and experimentation, as we have already seen, is in the present state of public opinion scarcely practicable, if not next to impossible. Some years ago, in Washington, a young member of the American Psychological Association electrified that august body when he reported on a series of psycho-physiological experiments conducted on a number of couples during the time of their actual mating. Certainly no epoch-making discoveries were made as a result of these experiments. The inferences about the primary emotions and the sympathetic nervous system, to my mind, seemed insignificant, yet the step was a bold one, and for that reason, memorable.

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### THE TABOO ON SEX EXPERIMENTS

What seems to be at the bottom of the prohibition of such experiments, besides the religious atmosphere and the moralistic tone of the country, is probably the feeling that some one is going to get an extra dose of pleasure in this type of research, and if there is anything that is generally begrudged more than wealth and luxury, it is sexual gratification. Perhaps it will be necessary some day, in order to circumvent this perfectly understandable — and to a large extent reasonable — emotion or sentiment, to train a body of artificial eunuchs for the purpose of conducting such experiments; and if the Church could view with approval the practice of castrating prospective choir singers for the benefit of the service and the congregation, possibly it can be expected to look upon a similar procedure in the cause of science with at least a certain degree of equanimity.

We lack experimental evidence and we lack statistical generalizations. Perhaps some day a future Galton will undertake to direct a systematic survey to test out the truth of the notion current among the common people that the strength of the sex urge is determined by, or at least runs parallel with, the size of the external *pudenda*. So far we do not know whether there is any significant correlation between the internal secretions of the gonads and sex delinquency. In the criminological literature there are scattered allusions to such a

correlation, but in nearly every case they rest on a tenuous basis.

Kretschmer<sup>19</sup> would do well to institute an inquiry into the correspondence of physique and sex vitality. To a certain extent, Sigaud's school in France has furnished us a cue here and there, *e. g.*, if we are to attach any weight to the diagrams of Mac-Auliffe, then the cerebral type seems to be characterized by a large head and small reproductive organs. Yet on the whole we are still swayed and swamped by the observations of the popular mind. Those with long legs (*e. g.*, the *microsplanchnic* type of De-Giovanni, Viola and the Italian morphological school in general) are supposed to be "poor lovers" (and the very phrase "poor lover" is decidedly vague and indefinite, revealing the ambiguity of the mass-mind in all its haziness; for it may refer to devotion, or to demonstrative affection or libidinousness and potency). Again, it is thought that those with a powerful build will prove to be hypersensual, while the slight and asthenic are lacking in sex vitality. And what do we find often to be the case? The full-blooded and well-built Beau Brummel may be sexually inadequate, if not altogether impotent, while the puny couple have a regular platoon of children trailing after them. Witness also the painful disillusionment of many a girl who is attracted to the professional or college athlete because of his apparent

19) I omit citing the works of the writers referred to in this paragraph, as they are referred to in my *Bibliography of Character and Personality* and discussed in *The Psychology of Character*.

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virility only to find that accomplishment on the grid-iron, field or links is not an accurate indicator of ability in other physical activities. Similarly the vivacious flirt, who seems to burn with passion, while engaged in making conquests, often turns out to be a salamander, in the sense Addison described the term, after she has "made her catch."

### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL METHOD

In addition to the questionnaire and the statistical study as substitutive methods for experimentation, we have the anthropological and sociological studies, the value of which is of course indisputable, but their underlying assumption is highly questionable. It is rather the sociologist, applying the findings of the anthropologist, who is to be charged with begging the question; for, in a multitude of books and articles, it is implied that since Westermarck, Seligman, Róheim, or Malinowski has found such and such conditions to obtain in primitive society, as well as in civilization, then we must all be led to the conviction that the institution or practice in vogue is natural and rational; and all attempts at breaking away from the moorings of tradition would spell disaster. The argument is generally put forth not in this crude form; nevertheless whatever subtle phrases it is couched in, the point of it is the same.

We may well ask whether the universality of a practice is a guarantee of its rationality. First of all, of course, it would have to be established whether

any human institution has been uniformly accepted throughout the world; and there would probably arise a divergence of opinion at the very outset; since Westermarck's laborious work has shown, if anything, that marriage might mean anything from life bondage and rape to what is virtually *free love*. Yet suppose all the facts pointed to a uniform course of behavior, it is still to be proven that our social organization must rest on a foundation laid by our primitive ancestors. As well might one urge that our *scientific* notions should have followed the trend of the beliefs of the masses, which, on many subjects, have changed but little in spite of education.

#### THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT IN RUSSIA

For two decades, Russia has been undergoing a social experiment of tremendous proportions, thus showing that the present *can* be divorced from the past in a definite manner. Whatever our religious, moral, æsthetic or social views, it seems to me we are beholden to the USSR for exposing itself to the hazards of such a radical experiment on a gigantic scale. I am not at all unmindful of the grave complications which such an innovation entails, and from the inimitable satires of contemporary Soviet writers one may gather that the new order has its trials and tribulations.

Indeed, the gradual tightening of the laws relating to marriage, divorce, alimony, and abortion, would indicate that the simple is not so simple after all even in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, inasmuch as we can ob-

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serve the outcome from our vantage ground of safety, we must all, in a sense, feel grateful for the heroic efforts put forth on behalf of the new ideology. Russia is now wrestling with the Hegelian doctrine that *what is, is right*. Perhaps it is not for us to say which is the saint and which the dragon. The battle, however, so far as the social organization of the world is concerned, marks a turning-point in history.

### THE ANIMAL EXPERIMENT

I have yet to advert to another instrument employed in the clarification of the sex situation, *viz.*, the animal experiment. This type of investigation has only been recently inaugurated, and a large share of the credit for the perfecting of the technique is due to behaviorism.

The animal experimenter who uses the rat or the monkey in lieu of the human subject, in order to determine from the results the sexual status of man, obviously supposes that what applies to the species *rodens* or *rhesus* will hold of *homo sapiens*. Certainly in the absence of experiments on humans, the results gained from controlled observations on primates and lower animals are not to be sniffed at. Thus far, however, the conclusions as applied to man are either forced or else of no great import. When Morgan<sup>20</sup> discovers that a rodent prevented by severe punishment from participating in sex activity loses weight and becomes emaciated and

20) J. J. B. Morgan: "The Measurement of Instincts," abstracted in *Psychological Bulletin*, 1923, vol. XX, p. 94. One of the results cited was communicated to me orally.



starved, or that the inhibition built up, thanks to the electrical shock, endured only in the case of one female rat, but not in the other subjects, we are not at all surprised. No experiments are needed to drive home the moral; and yet it is well known that under the sway of sublimation (religion, art, science, finance, politics), the human animal can evade the consequences of such deprivation. Indeed, Flaubert was said to have admonished young artists to lead a life of repression, so as to intensify their creative impulses. The wonderful adjustive mechanism in man, the cultural superstructure fashioned by a steady evolutionary ascent over thousands of years — all this sets at naught the generalizations from animal experiments when applied to human beings.

It is true we are sometimes promised a direct extension of the animal technique to experiments on human beings. In a passage which becomes cryptic toward the end, Morgan opens up the field of inquiry with considerable confidence when he outlines the following program:

"White rats are being used merely to develop experimental technique. When this is done the work will be continued upon dogs. This should enable us later to carry the same procedure over to humans with the restriction that experimentation in this field will have to be limited to the type which will in the end prove beneficial to the person undergoing experimentation." But I could find no evidence that the undertaking has been carried out, and the application of results from

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experiments on the lower animals to the complicated mental life of man still remains a moot point.

For this reason we shall have to discount one of the purposes of Hamilton's investigation on the sex tendencies of monkeys.<sup>21</sup> It is, to be sure, interesting to learn that the so-called perversions are not confined to man, and that our phyletic cousins are given to masturbation, homosexuality, bestiality (naturally in a reduced sense) and the whole catalogue of sins for which our civilization is blamed. What then? The rational-minded will not have cause to be elated over the fact or to triumph over the sentimental moralist, just because the despised and condemned pervert is in such good company, nor will the conventional philistine feel obliged to change his negative point of view as to the naturalness and normality of perversions under certain conditions, much as they may outrage his finer sensibilities.

It is not necessary to go into any more of the investigations on the sexual behavior of infra-human beings. The bibliography on the mating activities of animals is extensive, although it is only recently that psychologists have turned their attention to that subject; and within the last fifteen years, C. P. Stone has contributed fully a score of papers on the sex life of rats, rabbits, etc., chiefly in the *Journal of Comparative Psychology* and the *American Journal of Physiology*, while the neat experiments of Wallace Craig have broadened our concept of appetite in the animal world.

21) G. V. Hamilton: "Sexual Tendencies in Monkeys," *Journal of Animal Behavior*, 1914, vol. IV.

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Within the last ten years, a number of psychologists and sociologists have made serious attempts to deal scientifically with the problems involved in marriage, culminating in the recent gigantic work of Terman and his associates, *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, a study which has much in its favor as regards detail and candor but which also has its limitations in that the sampling is confined to one general locality and to more or less the college educated stratum, while the range of wedded life is too far extended.

The fact, however, that such an investigation could be carried out, that such ultra-intimate questions could be asked of husband and wife separately as would only a short while ago have been considered unthinkable is sufficient proof of the progress which we have made in the direction of at least enlightenment. The attitude that we must not tamper with the "mysteries of life" is now giving way to a persistent search for the underlying causes of premarital difficulties and domestic conflict.

It is somewhat revealing that in a review of E. S. Smith's *A Study of Twenty-Five Adolescent Unmarried Mothers in New York City* Ruth S. Cavan, who is well experienced in the practical sociology of adolescent and adult personal problems, has occasion to say in 1939, "It seems that an adequate analysis of the process by which a girl becomes an unmarried mother is yet to be executed." (*American Journal of Sociology*, March, 1939, vol. XLIV, page 777.)

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### THE ISSUE AT STAKE

We must hasten, however, to resume the theme with which we began this chapter and at the same time to sum up the result of our survey. Our task was to examine what dynamic psychology has to offer in the way of solving the timeless problems of sex conduct. Should sex freedom be vociferously advocated or should the situation take care of itself? We have seen that the psychologist is bound by temperamental and other biases; and even in dynamic psychology we cannot point in any one direction as the goal of our contemplated sex reforms. The dynamic psychologist is earnestly concerned about sex. In fact, this constitutes his chief interest; but he is disinclined to trespass on the territory of the social reformer, the moralist or the sociologist.

We may distinguish two types of temperamental outlook among dynamic psychologists, the *individualistic*, which leans toward self-expression in sex matters as in everything else, and the socio-moralistic or *tribal Weltanschauung*, which is overawed by the taboo and clings to convention and tradition. Between the two, there are intermediate stages and, perhaps, oscillating phases, leading to mental conflict.

### THE ETERNAL DILEMMA

If sex indulgence were in the class of anti-social conduct, such as theft, robbery, fraud, and the like,

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then *cadit quaestio*. No one would venture so much as to lose a word on the subject of its legitimacy, but many a young man and young woman ask themselves constantly, until they are brain-fagged, whether that type of virtue is worth the pains of exercising. Who benefits by the restraint? And can the one who remains chaste because of his or her regard for the rights of the prospective mate be certain that the latter has been guided by similar considerations?

In how many torn minds does there resound the echo of this sorrowful plaint:

*If, as they say, You hold the world;  
In the hollow of Your mighty hand,  
And each life that gleams there for a while  
Was fashioned and fated at Your own command,*

*Then do I come to You — not in prayer  
But only as a weary woman may,  
And this question I fling up to You,  
Why did You put my soul upon this path  
If it was fate that I should lose my way?*

*How could You never lift a staying hand  
Or still the lilt of my heart's glad song;  
If You placed this passion in my storm-swept soul  
Then, God, why not help me bear the wrong?*

On the other hand, we may take it as a mark of character to inhibit a powerful impulse, provided of course this inhibition or repression has its *rationale* and is not merely the imposition of an unthinking herd.

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As the Elder Brother in *Comus* exclaims:

*I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength  
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.  
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity.  
She that has that is clad in complete steel  
And like a quivered nymph, with arrows keen,  
May trace huge forests, and unharbored heaths  
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,  
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,  
No savage fierce, bandit, or mountaineer,  
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.*

The modern sex radical, living three hundred years later than the Puritanic author of this *mask*, naturally is entitled to ask whether the virgin might not just as well dispense with her maiden purity, and then in greater safety could she "trace huge forests and unharbored heaths," if she fancied making such excursions.

Our conflict between sex expression and sex repression is really grounded in one of these moral (perhaps even cosmic) antinomies which can never be satisfactorily resolved. You unwind your bobbin swiftly and confidently until you are practically at the end, when lo, you have struck a knot and begin winding it up again, but there is an even greater knot to be found at the other end of the thread, and so you keep winding and unwinding without making any real progress.

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### AN OMINOUS ADMISSION

There is, however, one aspect of the sex situation which the "expressionists," in their sanguine advocacy of freedom from all restriction, do not seem to have considered. It is the *fundamental nature of craving not to be fully gratified*. Freud has dwelt on this point in a tone of puzzled *naïveté*. "However strange it may sound," observes this acute writer, "I think the possibility must be considered that something in the nature of the sexual instinct itself is unfavorable to the achievement of absolute gratification." This *aperçu* calls for a good deal of comment<sup>22</sup> which space restriction, however, would not permit, but at any rate we may take this remark for our starting-point. Assuming that there is no real satisfaction in the most intimate and most varied embraces, then would the disappointment be any the less keen, if there were to be no restrictions? Must we cite illustrations from that Persian tyrant, Artaxerxes, who was said to have offered half his kingdom to any one who could invent a new type of pleasure? Or need we hark back to the days of the degenerate Roman emperors, who spent their lives in orgies the contemplation of which would be revolting even to the most sophisticated?

One who is not hidebound by convention might well agree with the sex radicals, if a definite *terminus*

22) If the widely quoted saying "*post coitus triste*," is well-founded, we ought to ascertain whether the cause is primarily psychological or physiological.

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*ad quem* were kept in mind, but once the ungratifiability of the sex instinct is recognized, it seems clear that the open and unimpeded road would lead to certain destruction. Hence the great store that is laid by chastity. In itself it is perhaps a useless quality, but it constitutes a great barrier to more advanced steps, and therefore serves as a means of protection against future inroads of the whole gamut of desires which lie dormant in the breast of man.

### WANTON DEPRIVATION

It is futile to deny that our civilization has fumbled in the ordering of sex relations. I can hardly believe that it is the worst possible world in that connection, but it certainly is not the best conceivable either; and what makes matters worse is that with all the progress in medicine, with all the increase of human comfort, with all the technical improvements of the day, it is doubtful whether the sex act affords an equal amount of gratification among married couples to-day to what it did in past generations. Dyspareunia, to judge from the reports of physicians, is on the increase. The sexual anesthesia and frigidity of women, as well as the impotence of men, are topics that cannot be glossed over. Instead of an enhancement of sexual pleasure, there seems to be a *pro rata* diminution. Surely there is enough material here for sociologists to ponder and analyze.

✓ The pitiful state of those, for the most part women,



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who, at the behest of society, are deprived of all sex experiences, adds to the poignancy of the *Weltschmerz* which every intellectual person must feel. In a remarkable book by an anonymous writer whose breadth of view, range of relevant information, and logical power stamp him as one of the sages of the last century — and a sort of warrior, to boot, for daring to publish his views — we read:

“It is safe to make the assertion that celibacy is a thousandfold more injurious than prostitution. There is, I should judge, not more than one open and avowed prostitute in 5,000 of the female sex; while nearly half of the nubile women, that is, counting virgins, widows, and married women whose husbands are more or less absent from their homes, or who are unhappily mated—more than half the women, I say, are denied the regular, legitimate gratification of their sexual cravings. I argue, then, that male celibacy, as affecting so large a number of women, is a far greater evil than prostitution.”<sup>23</sup>

The average man and woman will throw up their hands in horror at such an iconoclastic utterance, made by the way at the very zenith of mid-Victorian prudery. Yet we cannot help admitting that there is some point to this protest, even it is true that the situation since 1872 has changed considerably in favor of freer relations between the sexes. The Terman investigation has

23) *The Truth About Love* (1872), p. 99 This seems to be a second somewhat expurgated edition of an earlier publication which had been withdrawn from circulation as “somewhat too frank.”

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brought out that virginity is no longer regarded with such awe as in the past, but we must remember, too, that the persons who answered the questionnaires in this case are of a special set. In certain quarters, the following paragraph will not be accepted at its face value.

One hundred per cent enforcement of the moral ban against premarital sexual experience has probably never been attained. With the development of contraceptives, disease prophylaxis, and rapid transportation, its enforcement has become altogether impossible. In proportion as the fear of disgrace or disease is eliminated, the sense of shame is dissipated. Premarital sexual experience on the part of a woman, even when known, no longer makes her an outcast or bars her from an advantageous marriage. The data we have to present seem to indicate that premarital chastity has lost most of its significance so far as relation to marital happiness is concerned.<sup>24</sup>

The crux of the problem will be clearly perceived when we ask not how matters in general have changed, but rather how an individual confronted by a dilemma involving sex practice can decide for himself or herself that the consequences in his or her particular acts will not be fraught with danger, in spite of the loosening of public opinion.

24) Terman et alii: *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, page 320.

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### THE "MINIMUM JOY" PLAN

Perhaps we ought to plead in favor of a *minimum joy* in the sexual sphere as in the case of the minimum wage in the economic sphere. The two appetites that hold the world together, as Schiller expressed it, should be on a par in this respect. As society is now constituted, there are certain classes of individuals (the actors, actresses, wrestlers, boxers, professional ball players, and in general all those to whom the public would at one time say "*damne-toi, pourque tu m'amuses*" that is "Be damned, so long as you entertain me") that wallow in sex bounty, while perhaps the majority of respectable people, if not starved, are at any rate decidedly undernourished.

To carry out a constructive policy in this respect would tax the ingenuity of the most efficient social engineer. Changing public opinion is at best a slow and tedious process. Just as laws are made for comparatively honest people, while the crooks often circumvent legislation, so public opinion affects only the people of standing and position, particularly those who have identified their interests with the community. The breath of scandal strikes like a poisoned arrow at the very heart of the man and woman with a purpose in life. The fatal warning *tetigisse periisse* constantly rings in their sensitive ears; and the conflict arising out of the social *veto* and the individual *amo* is in itself an excruciating mental pain<sup>25</sup> which only a suffering

25) A discussion of conflict will be found in my *Psychology of Character* in the chapter headed "Character and Conflict."

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humanity knows and feels, finding solace perhaps in the thought that

*There's naught in this life sweet  
If man were wise to see't  
But only melancholy  
O sweetest melancholy !*

Forsooth, that is the saving grace of an otherwise unbearable situation — a spiritual compensation for the physical and mental torments of life. It is this conflict which shapes our greatest masterpieces. The lyric depths of every *De Profundis* psalm, from the biblical poet down to Oscar Wilde, are channeled by the dredge-iron of misery.

*Superior woes, superior stations bring.*

### HOPE IN COÖPERATION

But it is not a gospel of renunciation that I am preaching here. Even if it should be true that all the great have suffered misery, it does not follow that all the wretched are great. As to compensation in an after-life for the privations in this world, only the religious-minded can be comforted by the thought that they are storing up in the heavenly bank a tidy reward for their asceticism and physical want. The maxim that "virtue is its own reward" will appeal to a small minority, and even then the minor premise (that chastity or sex repression is a virtue) is a contestable propo-

## *Sex in Dynamic Psychology*

sition. In this search for truth, in this quest of distributing happiness on a more equitable basis<sup>26</sup> than of yore, psychologist, sociologist, anthropologist, biologist, eugenicist and legislator will have to work together, together forge the chain of reason, each contributing perhaps one link, until the final result is achieved, and the bond of sham is broken.

26) That we have progressed considerably in this direction is evident from the eradication of the revolting *jus primae noctis*, feudalism and other damnable institutions.



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## Chapter IV.

# REASON AND THE NEUROTIC

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#### IV

### THE NEUROTIC THROUGH THE AGES

There is a widespread belief that nervousness or "nerves", as the masses refer to it, is a newcomer to our repertory of ailments, practically a contemporary of our jazz and swing era, and at any rate coincident with the machine age.

By some authors, neurosis has been traced to the *fin de siècle* spirit, the *ennui* of the *Zeitgeist*. Other students of society lay it at the door of puritanism, repressed and in revolt. Still others see the cause in the rapid tempo of our skyscraper civilization with which our psychophysical constitution can scarcely keep apace, the masses of experiences, impinging as they do on our nervous system, congested in the form of a big blooming buzzing confusion.

We shall grant that modern, and still more, modernistic, living, has lowered the threshold of our discomforts, has rendered our nervous mechanism more delicate and taut, and that all the social phenomena enumerated have served to heighten the neurotic coefficient in the individual and what I should call the *index surdus* of the race, but *homo neuroticus*, it is my contention, is coeval with *homo sapiens*. In fact, the conditions of the one are the conditions of the other.

It is true we have become more discerning lately,

more "neurosis-conscious", whereas a century ago, the mere neurotic was a negligible quantity, a mere X, whom only acute observers would casually spot as an individual to be pilloried either as a madman or else as a profligate. Allusions to the neurotic in ancient literature are rare, except perhaps in conjunction with exaggerated satire, anecdotal hyperbole and malicious defamation.

In consequence of this infrequency of mention, it has been concluded generally that neurosis is a comparatively recent adjunct to our woes and ills, on the ground presumably that if the thing existed, it would be talked about. This reminds me of my grammar school teacher's final dictum to the effect that bad eyesight was a modern defect, since "where do we find in the Bible that Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob ever wore glasses?" — a dainty morsel of evidence every bit as conclusive as the gag about the existence of wireless telegraphy in antiquity because in all the excavations no wires were found among the ruins of ancient settlements.

✓ The Bible is not exactly like a modern case-book in psychiatry, yet it is not difficult to spot characteristics of the phobic, the melancholic, the paranoiac, and the maniac. The prophets were all considered madmen by the conventional *bourgeoisie*, but even allowing for the inability of the philistine, no matter what age he happens to be flourishing in, to understand the dreamer, we may gather that the social reformers (not uplifters) of ancient Judea were far from normal in the ordinary sense of the word.

## *The Neurotic Through The Ages*

### WHAT IS A NEUROTIC?

But before proceeding any farther, it is incumbent upon us to define that greatly used term *neurosis*.

We know what the *medical view* of neurosis is: a nervous breakdown making a patient out of a healthy person. The indicator in this case is the *mental distress* of the individual, and probably also the annoyance of those close to him.

The *social touchstone* seems to be that of adjustment to the norms of society. The question asked is: Does the individual fall in line with the dictates and practices of the community, or is he maladjusted, disgruntled and intractable? This is the institutional approach and quite in keeping with the "Babbitts" who think, or at least used to think prior to 1930, that "God's in his heaven" and "All's right with the world."

Neither of these major views appeals to me as fundamental. The medical approach is subjective; the social is relative. We cannot really know what maladjustment is until we see the distant future. The *status quo* cannot serve us as a basic guide.

It is otherwise with the rational criterion which regards neurosis as a logical twist or perversity caused probably by an affective knot. If an individual defeats his own end by some calculated act, he is certainly neurotic. If a person will not listen to reason and palpably destroys his own chances, there is before us a neurotic case. It is not the tic, the nervous habit, or

chorea which is typical of neurosis, but the *apparently* controlled behavior which baffles explanation.

Everyone wishes to be well, yet an invalid may resist all sound advice and prolong his illness. A suitor who has been rejected by his beloved may marry out of spite the very person who had hitherto repelled him. A miser may spend a fortune trying to collect an insignificant debt. All these are samples of neurosis, although the individual involved may not require medical or institutional attention.

While it is true that the average individual whose actions do not conform to a rational standard will find himself maladjusted, as well as in the long run worried and a nuisance both to himself and to others, the three standpoints by no means coincide, although there is a good deal of overlapping. The "rational standard" view provides us with a criterion *for all time* — which is the only criterion worthy of its name, and certainly in surveying the neurotic through the ages some such measure is prerequisite. Else we have two variables, the individual and the milieu, so that it becomes nigh impossible to pass an opinion as to the neurotic index of the individual until we understand the *mores* of the community; and we can never be certain that our interpretation of the period in question is valid to the extent that the individual can be judged thereby.

An individual with advanced and enlightened ideas among the tradition-bound Fijis or Maoris would be neurotic in the light of the tribe. If a South American Indian Chief who acted as host to another chief did

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not repeat every statement of his guest, except naturally for the change of the personal pronoun, until both got tired and bored with each other, he would be regarded as queer, and he himself might conceivably display symptoms of an inner conflict, but on our principle the man is eminently sane.

### HISTORICAL NEUROTICS

With this preamble we may begin our short survey of neurotic action in various periods of history. To disentangle a given act from the superstition or ignorance actuating it is indeed altogether too difficult, even if we were acquainted with many of the circumstances surrounding the behavior. Ignorance *per se* is no neurosis; *it is only when people persist in their ignorance while enlightenment is at hand*, not even so far as around the corner, that we have reason to suspect that there is a functional twist in the nervous system, an affect which, like a knot in a plank of wood, resists any attempt at modification.

Our safest plan in reviewing the situation is to consult outstanding writers of a particular age. In biography, we come upon certain idiosyncrasies that arrest our attention, *e. g.*, the strange vacillation of a rather impetuous man like Cicero in the purchase of a suitable memorial to his deceased daughter Tullia, or the invariable conclusion of Cato's speeches with *Carthago est delenda*, which has now become a famous allusion.

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Ancient biography, however, is by no means reliable as a guide. What we should consider peculiar behavior today did not occur to Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius or Philostratus as peculiar. They were interested in exposition rather than in *exposés*. Debunking was not their *métier*. Hence the observations that would provide us with cues for further research are at best casual only.

The historians of antiquity are more inclined to ferret out flaws and *memorabilia*, but who nowadays would take seriously the partial fables of Herodotus and the prejudices of Tacitus?

We turn to the satirists; for surely they would be most apt to catch the foibles of their contemporaries; and again we are at sea, for in most cases, the exaggeration reeks with malice as in Aristophanes' *Frogs* and *Clouds*, in the broadsides of Juvenal and the barbed shafts of Martial, or is charged with cynicism, as in the works of Lucian, who was bent upon having a good time profaning the revered past. It is not so much that the pot calls the kettle black which confuses us, as the inability to judge the color altogether.

### DISCOVERING THE NEUROTIC

In all this antique maze, we nevertheless do find an alley which does not prove to be a *cul de sac*; and the two passages which follow may be regarded as the first references to the neurotic as a class or group in all Western literature. The author of these passages has

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not only observed the mannerism or quirk of certain individuals. He has definitely discovered the fact that there is such a thing as neurosis, and with an extraordinary directness comes to the point.

When a carpenter is ill he asks the physician for a rough and ready cure; an emetic or a purge or a cautery or the knife — these are his remedies. And if some one prescribes for him a course of dietetics and tells him that he must swathe and swaddle his head, and all that sort of thing, he replies at once that he has no time to be ill, and that he sees no good in a life which is spent in nursing his disease to the neglect of his customary employment; and therefore bidding good-bye to this sort of physician, he resumes his ordinary habits and either gets well and lives and does his business, or if his constitution fails, he dies and has no more trouble.

Has he not an occupation; and what profit would there be in his life if he were deprived of his occupation?

But with the rich man this is otherwise. Of him we do not say that he has any specially appointed work which he must perform if he would live. He is generally supposed to have nothing to do.

I often read the passage in a university extension course, and ask the students to place roughly the date of the publication from which the above passage was extracted. The nearest guess is out by over 2000 years. None in the class believe the writer to have lived earlier than 150 years ago. Many suppose him to have flour-

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ished in the last generation, and that only because the question: "How old, do you think, is this passage just read?" is one which suggests anything but recency.

It is scarcely necessary now, after presenting a lead here and there, to reveal the secret that the shrewd observer whose description of the hypochondriac sounds so modern is none other than the alleged visionary, the father of idealism and master of the practical Aristotle — none other than Plato; and furthermore that the passage occurs in his imperishable *Republic*.

In another part of the same book, the following piece of dialogue lends further credence to the thesis that the neurotic was not a *rara avis* in ancient Athens; and with all our progress in technology, confidence games (both legal and illegal), birth control methods, bomb-throwing, and unemployment, we cannot pride ourselves on having produced the neurotic or even on having unearthed him. At least one type of neurotic was very well in evidence about 2500 years ago, as would imply these words:

"You would compare them," I said, "to those invalids who, having no self-restraint, will not leave off their habits of intemperance."

"Exactly."

"Yes," I said, "and what a delightful life they lead! They are always doctoring and increasing and complicating their disorders and always fancying that they will be cured by any nostrum which anybody advises them to try. Such cases are very common," he said, "with invalids of this sort."



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"Yes," I replied, "and the charming thing is that they deem *him* their worst enemy who tells them the truth, which is simply that unless they give up eating and drinking and wenching and idling, neither drug, nor cautery nor spell nor amulet nor any other remedy will avail."

### THE PARANOID — 2000 YEARS AGO

From Plato we proceed to his intellectual grandson, Theophrastus, who in addition to carrying on the tradition of his teacher, Aristotle, was the founder of characterology, or perhaps better, typology. The characters in Theophrastus's gallery are not intended to be descriptions of neurotics; nevertheless in one or two cases, the behavior portrayed borders on the clinical, and from the present angle is decidedly non-sane (as elaborated in the chapter "What is Sanity?") *e. g.*, the chronic grouch who, no matter how fortunate he is, ever complains that fate is against him.

A friend sends him part of a feast and he says to the bearer: "I suppose your master grudged me his soup and wine since he didn't invite me." His mistress smothers him with kisses: "I should be surprised," says he, "if they came from your heart." He gets angry with Zeus not because it does not rain, but because it rains too late. He finds a purse on the road: "Ah!" he says, "but I never found anything worth having." If he has bought a slave cheap by coaxing the seller, he remarks: "It is much too cheap to be good."

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Since excessive distrust is another deviation from a rational standard, we may regard the picture of the distrustful man as representative of a neurotic. While the overly suspicious burgher of ancient Greece is in the midst of a different set of circumstances and social manners from those of today, surrounded, as he is, by slaves who serve as personal treasurers, and called upon to depend on gentlemen's agreements more than in our present age, Theophrastus's delineation of the distrustful neurotic, after making allowance for historical conditions, fits his twentieth century descendant just as well.

What is the behavior of this individual? Of him Theophrastus writes:

When he has sent one of his slaves to buy provisions, he sends another one after the first to find out exactly what they cost. In travelling he carries his own money and sits down every few hundred yards to count it. In bed he asks his wife if she locked the money chest, if the cupboard is sealed and if the bolt on the outer door is shut; although she says "yes," up he jumps naked out of bed, lights the lamp and goes the rounds without his shoes to see they are all right; and then has great difficulty in getting to sleep. He has witnesses at hand when asking interest from his debtors to prevent their repudiating the debt. He sends his cloak to be cleaned, not to the best fuller, but to the man who gives best security.

We shall omit the Dark Ages not because the neurotic is absent during those centuries, but because that

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whole age seems to be steeped in a mass of ignorance and superstition, so that sanity appears to be not the rule but the exception.

### MODERN OBSERVERS

There is much in Rabelais' gigantic buffoonery, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and even in Montaigne, to give us a cue now and then about the mental status of their contemporaries, as also in the monumental satire of Cervantes, but it would take a commentary to disentangle the serious from the burlesque elements. A more ambitious work would be required to record the *history* of the neurotic, and no doubt such a comprehensive project will sometimes be carried out. It is my purpose here only to give a bird's eye view of the course and to dwell on the more direct utterances on the subject.

We may have thought that the neurosis connected with technocracy is only of very recent origin, but who reading La Bruyère's *Les Caractères* will fail to associate the ingenuity of Hermippe with the labor-saving technologist of to-day?

This Hermippe had taken ten steps to go from his bed to his wardrobe, and now by altering his room he only takes nine — how many steps saved in the course of his life! Elsewhere you turn the door-knob, push it or pull and the door opens; what a waste of labor! Here is an unnecessary movement which he saves himself — and how? That is a mystery he does not reveal. Indeed he is

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a great master in mechanics and machinery, at least in those everyone can get on without. Her-mippe brings the daylight into his house otherwise than by the window; he has found a way of going up and down the stairs otherwise than by the stair-way, and he is looking for a better way of going in and out than by the door.

All this goes to show that human propensities and their exaggerations are beyond time and clime. There were probably just as many "out of step" (not so much with society as) with the dictates of reason, but there were fewer observers then than there are now to bring the follies to the notice of the world, and what few there were merely looked upon the oddities as moral weaknesses to be pointed out only but not be studied ætiologically. Even Montesquieu, who has gone into the spirit of the law so thoroughly and penetratingly was content with merely laughing at the social world of his time in his equally famous *Lettres Persanes*.

It is in the dramatists that we should expect to find types answering to the neurotic. In Molière's Harp-agon, in his Alceste or Argan we see clear-cut neurotics. As Toinette in *Le Malade Imaginaire* says of her master, with feigned solicitude and thinly veiled sarcasm,

*He walks, sleeps, eats and drinks like other folks  
but that does not prevent him from being very ill.*

If Molière's object was to poke fun at the foibles of his contemporaries, Shakespeare brings us a bit closer to our quest, not alone because of the variety of his

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characters but on account of the actual references to neurotics. And let us not look for these in the artificial stupidities of the Gobos and Dromios, in the extravaganzas of such plays as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or even in the simulated madness of Hamlet. To be sure, Hamlet was a typical neurotic because of his *Gruebelei*, apparently an abouliac who could not make up his mind, or act with decision when he did resolve to act, although his presence of mind with Polonius and final precipitateness in the duel scene would argue in favor of Hamlet's red-bloodedness after all.

### SHAKESPEARE — PSYCHOLOGIST

Be it as it may, what singles the Stratford bard out as a psychologist *par excellence* is the abundance of *casual* references to neurotic behavior, as if these acts or attitudes were to be taken for granted. I shall merely cite one instance.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, not a single character is drawn as a neurotic. English comedy, unlike French comedy, makes merry over situations and plots rather than over persons. *Shylock*, true enough, is drawn as a tragic figure, which bids fair to turn the comedy into a tragedy, but Shylock is no neurotic in any sense of the word, whatever else we make of him. He proceeds in his plan deliberately and systematically, giving his reasons at every step, his motive being revenge. When pressed, however, for better, for more humane reasons

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he takes refuge in arbitrariness and claims the prerogative of a neurotic.

*Some men there are love not a gaping pig;  
Some that are mad, if they behold a cat,  
And others when the bagpipe sings i' the nose  
Cannot contain their urine for affection.*

The English writers were among the first to contribute to the subject of neurosis. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, in spite of its learned digressions, still remains after three centuries a classic treatise of the deeper neuroses, covering much more than the title would imply.

### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NEUROTIC

In the character-writings of Samuel Butler (1612-1680) we come upon some astonishing *aperçus* with regard to the melancholy, hypersensitive, the hypochondriac and others. His clinical pictures are vitiated, as are all English character sketches, by a plethora of simile and synecdoche, yet the pattern is recognizable. In the passage to be quoted, Butler foreshadows not only the doctrine of the unconscious and not only the conflict between the *id* and the *ego* in later Freudian terminology but even the view that the neurotic seeks to escape from reality.

His soul lives in his body, like a mole in the earth, that labors in the dark, and casts up doubts

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and scruples of his own imagination, to make that rugged and uneasy, that was plain and open before. His brain is so cracked that he fancies himself to be glass, and is afraid that everything he comes near should break him in pieces. Whatsoever makes an impression in his imagination works itself in like a screw, and the more he turns and winds it, the deeper it sticks, till it is never to be got out again. The temper of his brain being earthly, cold, and dry, is apt to breed worms, that sink so deep into it, no medicine in art or nature is able to reach them. He leads his life, as one leads a dog in a slip that will not follow, but is dragged along until he is almost hanged, as he has it often under consideration to treat himself alone. After a long and mortal feud between his inward and his outward man, they at length agree to meet without seconds, and decide the quarrel, in which the one drops, and the other slinks out of the way, and makes his escape into some foreign world, from whence it is never after heard of. He converses with nothing so much as his own imagination, which being apt to misrepresent things to him, makes him believe, that it is something else than it is, and that he holds intelligence with spirits, that reveal whatsoever he fancies to him . . . He makes the infirmity of his temper pass for revelations, as Mohamet did by his falling sickness, and inspires himself with the wind of his own hypocondries.

Butler may be considered the psychiatrist of seventeenth century character-writers; for the enlightened purview of natural and social phenomena dominates most of his brief sketches. His description of a medi-

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cine-taker, three hundred years ago, is applicable to those who scan the advertisements to-day for "pink pills" and "vegetable compounds", but particularly the psychological quackeries that we have so much of to-day. And we may be reasonably certain that in another few centuries, there will be just as many trying out every remedy, nostrum or panacea that happens to strike their eye or ear, regardless of their education, social standing or business efficiency. Butler is now depicting not the melancholiac but the hypochondriac, the "Medicine-Taker".

He is no sooner well, but any story or lie of a new famous doctor or strange cure puts him into a relapse, and he falls sick of a medicine instead of a disease, and catches physic like him that fell into a looseness at the sight of a purge. He never knows when he is well, nor sick, but is always tampering with his health till he has spoiled it, like a foolish musician that breaks his strings with striving to put them in tune;

The overdoer is another neurotic type which Butler has singled out for treatment.

He always overstocks his ground, and starves instead of feeding, destroys whatsoever he has an extraordinary care for, and like an ape hugs the whelp he loves most to death. All his designs are greater than the life, and he laughs to think how nature has mistaken her match, and given him so much odds that he can easily outrun her. He allows of no merit but that which is superabundant.



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All his actions are superfoetations, that either become monsters or twins, that is, too much or the same again: for he is but a supernumerary, and does nothing but for want of a better.

The story of the anxiety neurotic has been well told by another seventeenth century character-writer, *viz.*, Richard Flecknoe in his *Enigmatical Characters* (1658). It is worth noting that Flecknoe picks a woman for his model.

### OF ONE WHO TROUBLES HERSELF WITH EVERYTHING

Her mind is just like their stomachs who convert all they eat into diseases; for everything is matter of trouble with her, and she's perpetually haunted with a panic fear, and "Lord! Lord! What shall I do? What will become of us?" Not contented with her own cares she troubles herself with those of others, and goes more than a thousand miles to seek them out, being as much troubled for the King of China's loss of his kingdom as for our late King's losing his.

In which she shows so much charity but ill-ordered, a good nature but sickly and infirm, and a great stock of pity and compassion but ill-husbanded and managed; nay, she troubles herself with conditionary thoughts of things that never were, nor are, nor are like to be: and if others' businesses so trouble her, imagine how she is troubled with her own, of which, when she has any, what betwixt doing and undoing it, like Penelope's web, she never makes an end; nor can any else for her at last, she so entangles it.

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From our present vantage ground, it is difficult to appreciate the insight of Burton, Butler, Flecknoe and others who were able to spot neurotic symptoms at a time when the concept of the neurotic was an unknown cipher. The term "neurotic", first used in Lovell's *History of Animals and Minerals*, as early as 1661, signified a nerve tonic, and only in 1873, was the word employed as an adjective to designate a nervous condition, while the substantive use of "neurotic" does not occur until the '90's.

As a general term covering many of the neurotic traits so familiar to us in the twentieth century, the word "melancholy", or still more frequently in the eighteenth century "hypochondria", was in vogue.

It was Macaulay, I believe, who saddled the literary dictator of England with the stigma of hypochondria, although today Samuel Johnson would be classified as a typical neurotic. What with his tics and chorea, rolling walk, contortions, mutterings, gruntings, puffings, the peculiar habit of collecting scraps of orange peel, and what impresses especially the schoolboy, his irresistible desire to touch every post he passed, even to the extent of going back, if he had omitted to put his fingers on one, his long spells of depression — he surely was a neurotic, but the term "hypochondriac" probably by its sound suggested a crank, an abnormal person, one with a bilious disposition, etc.; and the derivation of the word indicates that the bile or spleen was held responsible for the particular condition.

In his *M. de Pourceaugnac*, Molière introduces a

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learned disquisition on hypochondriac melancholy through the medium of the windbag of a physician sent to treat M. de Pourceaugnac. Among other things we are told that there are three species of the disease we call melancholy.

The first, which arises from a direct disease of the brain; the second, which proceeds from the whole of the blood, made and rendered atrabilious; and the third, termed hypochondria, which is our case here, and which proceeds from some lower part of the abdomen, and from the inferior regions, but particularly the spleen; the heat and inflammation whereof sends up to the brain of our patient abundance of thick and foul fuliginosities; of which the black and gross vapors cause deterioration to the functions of the principal faculty, and cause the disease by which he is manifestly accused and convicted.

### THE NEUROTIC IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

It is a pity we cannot take a more leisurely stroll through the neurotic museum between the eighteenth century and the present time. Suffice it to say that with the rise of the modern novel, more attention was devoted to the neurotic. The Russian literature teems with neurotics; and it is not so much Dostoievsky with his profoundly psychopathic personalities, as Tolstoi, Goncharov, Gogol, Chekhov, Gorki, Kuprin, Veressaëv, among the pre-Soviet writers who furnish the material for our study. A young man at the opera sneezes and

slightly bespatters a high official in a *loge* nearby. He apologizes profusely and is excused, but the hapless man is certain that the general is mortified. Later in the evening, he beseeches him anew to forgive the terrible *faux pas*, and the general apparently bored, says impatiently "It's all right". That night, the young man knows no sleep; he rises early and is off again to seek pardon from the great man, but now the general is plainly out of sorts and tells the fellow that he must not bother him. There was not a shred of doubt this time that the general was incensed at the involuntary "crime". This led to brooding and anxiety. There was no way out of it but suicide, and that was the result of the harmless misunderstanding.

I believe it was Chekhov who was the author of this short story (although I may be mistaken). In Japan such stories would be too commonplace; for the young man's distress and eventual suicide are but usual routine under such circumstances, yet, from my point of view, no less neurotic.

In our own country, Edgar Allan Poe, both in his personal behavior and still more in his gruesome writings, evidenced the neurotic. His *Imp of the Perverse* is one of the first introspective accounts of aboulia and impulsion. While it is true Poe did not employ these terms, he has given us a remarkable piece of searching autobiography. His *Black Cat* is another of these psychological *études* that disclose the workings of the neurotic, in this case, perhaps better, the psychopathic

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mind. Indeed, there are few stories Poe wrote which did not disclose a phase of the abnormal mind.

Even in writers like Mark Twain, the neurotic note sounds occasionally. Every reader will remember the "Punch-in-the-presence-of-the-passenjaire" episode, which again points to an obsession finally released by a compulsive act.

Neurosis is no respecter of persons, nor does it mingle with the sad or the merry alone. Since there are so many varieties, the distribution is on a more equitable basis than the economic division of mankind.

Parallel with the literary approach to the neurotic there advanced the scientific study of the abnormal. I regard J. L. A. Koch, who was related to the famed historian of Greek philosophy, Zeller, as the pioneer in the neurotic field. It was he who presented in the late '80's a systematic and sympathetic account of what he called the psychopathic inferiorities, and what would correspond to the milder psychoneuroses. A former assistant of his in Germany gives me to understand that although Koch was the director of a well-known mental hospital, and withal, a lovable and kindly man, he embodied a miniature neurotic ward in his own person. It was he who supplied the missing link between the madman and the man in the street, and paved the way for psychoanalysis in that Freud's doctrine, too, removed the barrier between the normal and the abnormal.

The story of the neurotic, when it is finally told,

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will form perhaps the most fascinating chapter in the story of mankind.

### ARTIFICIALLY INDUCED NEUROSES

To this chapter a new wrinkle is being added through a fresh mode of attack which appears to impugn the thesis laid down in this essay.

In line with recent research on cancer and other organic diseases, a number of investigations have been initiated with the purpose in view of inducing neuroses — naturally in animals — under experimental control.

So impressive was the work in this direction conducted by N. R. F. Maier, particularly because of the cinema demonstration, which seems to clinch the issue, that the report was awarded the prize offered by the American Association for the Advancement of Science for the best paper presented at its annual meeting in 1938.

While Pavlov used dogs, and others experimented on other animals of the larger species, Maier and his associate, Glaser, worked with rats. An excellent technique was instrumental in revealing the types of behavior disorders which ensue when rats are frustrated by contradictory training. Not knowing what to expect, some of them become in turn greatly agitated, then inhibited, develop atypical mechanical behavior, like hopping or contracting muscles periodically, exhibit signs of abnormal tractability, and so on.

Whether the rats may be said to have become neu-

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rotic is of course one of those questions which can never be conclusively answered. If their behavior comes under the head of neurosis, it may well be asked how the fact tallies with my view of neurosis as a deviation from a rational standard. Can there be any talk of a rational standard in the case of rats?

Since the majority of psychologists and psychiatrists who have expressed themselves on the Maier showing did not consider the rats to have exhibited anything other than behavior disorders, I could of course take refuge in this general attitude of doubt. That there was evidence of a disturbance in the rats' general nervous system is incontestable. I must say that the hops and the tics followed by apparent stupors made me think of similar tragedies in men. In the case of the rat, this type of behavior seems especially striking because it is so foreign to the mercurial character of the rodent. I am willing to concede that the rat shows all the signs of a breakdown — but not a breakdown in the sense as we speak of it in human connection. In man, the breakdown is *incidental to the perception of a certain situation*. There is a mental displacement, a diminution of what little insight the individual might have possessed in the first place.

Can we speak in similar terms of the rat? Is it possible to say that the rat, noting that the task is self-contradictory or that the problem is unfair, or that it has been cheated of its deserts, can stand it no longer?

All we are justified in concluding is that the neuromuscular mechanisms are temporarily impaired, per-

haps because of a tugging in opposite directions. A chemical substance brought into contact with an inorganic body might produce similar effects. I still contend that the mental intermediary (either conscious or unconscious in the psychoanalytic sense) is prerequisite to any neurotic state. Human beings may be stubborn and stupid at the same time. The rat is not stubborn, as I have heard it explained on one occasion; it is merely stupid if it continues jumping in the wrong direction, that is to say, to its own disadvantage. The human animal, in his maladjustment, *recognizes some situation as factual which is palpably not so*. It is this recognition which makes him eligible to the neurotic class. If he does not recognize a situation which most individuals would accept, then he is defective in intelligence. It is possible to deduce as a corollary the proposition that *imbeciles and idiots cannot be neurotic*.



■

## Chapter V

# THE INFANTILIZATION OF AMERICA

■



V

## THE INFANTILIZATION OF AMERICA

For some years, on the basis of sociological observations, I have come to the belief that the majority of the inhabitants of the United States were becoming more like children, or better, that the barrier between child and adult was breaking down and both ages were being reduced to the same level. I thought of it and became more and more convinced of this new sort of democracy; but I could not bring myself to utter such words in public, because of the obvious refutation that confronted every such critic, *viz.*, the prestige, the greatness, the achievement, the success of the United States, all of which would be sufficient to quash any indictment on the supposed basis of immaturity. "If children can show such leadership, such prowess, such initiative and constructive power, then let us not grow up" — would be the just rejoinder.

The world slump which has affected the United States relatively more than any other country has at least removed the pragmatic defense. If one is not warranted in pointing a triumphant "I-told-you-so" finger, one need not fear, at any rate, the contemptuous shrug of the smug Babbitt whose sales for the day must demonstratively belie any sociological or psychological twaddle coming from the academic highbrow. Yet

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the burden of proof that the country is being juvenilized or "childified" is still on the shoulders of the critic.

By *infantilization*, since I do not expect to find all senses in *Webster's* until a later edition, I mean (1) the act or process of taking undue interest in children, (2) the state of being "child-conscious", and (3) the tendency to adapt the general environment to the level of children. As synonyms, I should propose "childification" and "juvenilization".

It is clear that the thesis put forth in this chapter is none other than this: that America, in the narrower sense, is a *land where adults are preoccupied with children and are themselves becoming more and more like children*, long before they reach their "second childhood".

### SYMPTOMS

You will naturally ask for the proof.

Most assuredly there must be adduced evidence. The conclusion arrived at is not merely an intuitive flash or a divine inspiration. We have a number of exhibits to make a strong case. The only question is where to begin; for as is well known, a sociological phenomenon, like the syndrome of an individual, is made up of a number of symptoms.

Let us begin with the children themselves. There is no country in the world where youngsters receive nearly the amount of attention they do in the United States. At first blush, this is as it should be — the high-

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est indication of civilization. But when we look into the pæans sung to childhood, when we perceive the apotheosis of infancy, when we take into consideration the absurd sacrifices made on behalf of their child by doting parents, the streak of perversity will soon become apparent. A mother will do her utmost to steer clear of a second confinement and will fuss and fret twice as much over her spoilt youngster as the European mother does over her whole brood of eight. Children, to be sure, require care and their lot is indeed a happier one than it was wont to be, but their initial paradise does not necessarily augur a bed of roses later in life; and certainly the obligations that parents of the better class impose upon themselves with regard to their children are not always moral or reasonable.

Many a father who is racked by the obsession "Nothing is too good for my child" stays awake nights thinking about what will become of his strapping boy of fifteen, if he should lose his job or fall sick and die. It hardly occurs to the poor man that his son could go to work and that, as it is, the boy enjoys greater opportunities than the father ever dreamt of at the same age. I have known this dread to make itself felt in men whose academic position or professional practice was assured for life.

It is normal, it is human to provide for one's family to the best of one's ability. In some cases, however — particularly in the upper strata of society — business men have committed suicide for no other reason than that they could not bestow the luxury upon their fam-

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ily to which they were accustomed in times of prosperity; and as for nervous collapses, it is notorious that at the root of many breakdowns among family men is the *sense of insecurity* in the financial world, something which occurs very rarely among bachelors. The average *responsible* American father is given to this phobia of economic privation, although it is undeniable that children can get along with fewer comforts than grown-ups. Naturally I am not referring to conditions in the slums, the mine districts and among the hill-folk where even milk is a luxury. The issue here is between the relative needs of the parents and the children in the average family during normal years; and it is maintained here that the public attitude favors the children much in excess of their requirements, deserts, or their own good.

### FROM ONE EXTREME TO THE OTHER

The reforms that have been inaugurated for the benefit of the child are, needless to say, a boon to humanity. For one thing, child labor has been largely done away with, and compulsory schooling has been extended. But at the same time so much responsibility has been taken off the adolescent's shoulder; and because the boy considers himself still as a child until he reaches the age of eighteen, he misses the urge to shift for himself, which was the greatest incentive to action in the former office boys and newsboys who rose to national eminence. The morale of such eighteen-year old young-

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sters must be a bit weak, while their knowledge of such matters as their elders do not suspect them to have makes it easier for them to succumb to the lure of crime.

What an advance in the child's world since the days of Charles Dickens — an advance, we fear, that has overreached the mark. The child now-a-days is invested with feelings and sentiments, with cares and sorrows that are to be found in none but the genius. The child's world has been segregated, and all knowledge adapted to its childish mind, with the result that many children experience it rather difficult later to change their juvenile point of view, attitude, demands, or whims, when they have reached their majority.

### EFFÈTE YOUTH

What does the child do with its privileges? It takes them, of course, for granted, as do many adults; and wants more privileges, and yet more. The poverty-stricken parents must accede to the clamors of their children for expensive toys; and the desires gratified beget ever new desires for toys. Now toys are a joy in the life of the child, but there was a time when a doll for a girl, and a tool chest or a mechanical train for a boy would be regarded as a munificent gift. Now, as our infantilization advances, it is realized that the doll, besides dresses, must have a doll carriage and then a chifferobe and all the other paraphernalia, perhaps even a doll's house including all the furnishings, so that

there is no end to these child delights, which last for a short time and are then cast aside by the *blasé* youngsters — a process to repeat itself in adult life with other kinds of toys. . . .

A child, to be sure, is an important member of society. Its health, its rearing, its education and its games are all fundamental to the state of affairs of the next generation. Taking all this for granted, let us ask whether a mother, in moderate circumstances, is warranted in her insistence on consulting a high-paid specialist every time baby contracts a cold. This baby cult is nowhere more evident than in the grotesque reverence in which writers and lecturers on child topics are held, no matter how platitudinous, on the one hand, and absurd on the other, their utterances are. Books on child study are not best sellers only because there are so many of them on the market. In some of the universities of the Middle West, the curriculum seems to be fairly studded with courses on the baby; and professors on the care of the baby are about as plentiful as nursemaids or mother's helpers.

#### EXPLOITING THE CHILD CULT

Copy-writers have long since learnt the important psychological principle that you can reach a mother's pocketbook most directly by haranguing her about her child. "Are you sure that your darling cherub has all the vitamins he needs for his strenuous school season?" "Would you deprive your precious of the only sport



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which can satisfy him?" "Why has your Jimmie not yet come home from school?" Such headlines with appropriate pictorial illustrations of little Jimmie in trouble somewhere and an anxious matron looking into the distance are the most effective melting substances for loosening the pursestrings of even the most hard-headed parents in financial straits. You can sell them greaseless emulsions and squeaking bears, invisible shoes and tasteless elixirs, electric fatteners, noiseless skates, and unshrinkable muscle-builders; and college graduates, in this respect, are no more critical than illiterate mothers — if anything, a bit more credulous.

Children are by far the greatest consumers in the United States. By far the large majority of American parents will forego real necessities themselves in order to bestow on their offspring suppositious benefits. That there are a number of exceptions, frivolous couples who will take their responsibilities lightly and will consider their own pleasures above the duties to their children, goes without saying, but that does not invalidate the general fact of an over-indulgence of and an excessive anxiety over one's progeny, developing at times into baby neurosis.

It is somewhat of an irony that this baby-consciousness should have arisen at a time when the teachings of birth control are tending to make babies ever scarce and scarcer. Perhaps it just exemplifies the operation of the principle of compensation in the sociological sphere; perhaps it is merely a bit of poetic justice, particularly when we note that those who are so "baby-

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wise" are babyless. In a remote way we are reminded of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who through his *Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Émile* revolutionizes the world's educational system and yet ignominiously, if that part of his *Confessions* is to be credited, deposits his five children in a foundling asylum.

So far the argument has centred about the first two senses of the term "infantilization". As to the juvenilization of ourselves and the environment, we must yet produce our exhibits.

### THE CONVERSE OF THE PROCESS

Very well then, let us start with the newspapers. Is there any other country whose press regularly makes out of the sports the feature of the day, with four pages of piffling sporting news and even eight pages in the Sunday editions avidly seized upon by the country's manhood? On scores of occasions I have examined abandoned newspapers in lunch rooms, waiting stations, street cars and subway trains. Almost invariably the page turned up was in the sporting section or else the comic strip.

If a critic were to hazard the statement that for every person reading the editorials or political news of the day, there are ten drinking in the details of bouts, scrimmages, etc., or feasting on the art of Popeye or Dopey and other such edifying productions in the newspapers, the conservative reader would shrug his shoulders with misgivings. Yet what are the facts?

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Far from the figures being exaggerated, we are told in a monthly bulletin of the Massachusetts Division of University Extension that "a certain well-known advertising investigator, in seeking to find what features of the daily newspaper were read most was startled to discover that the comic strips outranked any other single feature by a wide margin", and we may be sure that he did not direct his inquiries to chronological children.

Lately the unspeakably inane "colyums" have come in for a share of the honors. To dignify the stuff turned out day in and day out by fabulously paid "colyumists" by the name of "small-talk" is really to do violence to a good conversational word, but that is after all what the reading public wants. Small wonder then that the average intelligence of those drafted in the World War was found to be that of a twelve-year-old child, in other words, just above the level of a moron. But it hardly requires intelligence tests to bring out this fact. Most editors, even of metropolitan newspapers, will just tell you, between cocktails, of course, that they are catering to a host of morons.

### MORONS WITH POWER

These morons, however, are not without their shrewdness or talent. They are not without means, and both by dint of their numbers and collective wealth, they are determining the course of American institutions and American culture. For years these playboys have been making of the United States a vast

playground. Even in the very depth of our economic depression, 50,000 came to part with their bills in order to see someone slug a ball harder than someone else, 70,000 paid as much as half a million dollars for the pleasure of watching two huskies wallop each other until one of them was declared licked. Millions of people who could not afford the luxury of being eye-spectators were staying up during the night to hear, with bated breath, the account of the epoch-making event, and still more millions were discussing the results of cosmic magnitude the next morning as to whether the one could eventually smash the other, or not.

In the good old days of prosperity, the money spent on fistic entertainers reached dazzling figures. It is hardly believable that Dempsey, who in feudal days would have at most served as a bodyguard in the retinue of some rapacious baron, received twenty-seven thousand (\$27,000) dollars for every minute spent in the Carpentier fight, that the battle with Firpo netted him \$425,000 and that he made almost a million in his less fortunate bout with Tunney. While he was training at his camp, a long line of nitwits paid one dollar admission fees to see him do his daily dozen.

#### IDOLS OF THE MASSES

When the World Baseball Series opened in St. Louis several years ago, many were brandishing one hundred dollar bills for good seats, which explains in large part why "Babe" Ruth, the only association with Homer in the popular mind, should have refused \$75,000 as an

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inadequate salary for slugging a ball, and insisted on \$150,000 per annum, when intellectual giants and geniuses must live on a pittance. When the well-advertized Illinois ice-man "Red" Grange participated in a football game in Harlem one fine December afternoon about 75,000 men, women and children fought to gain admission, piling up the huge aggregate of \$100,000, out of which "Red" pocketed nearly \$25,000, a neat little sum for one day's work. "Red" is now reported to be "broke" after losing a million in various ill-considered promotions, but it is improbable that he will turn to his former occupation as an ice-man.

Money is not all these muscle men are receiving. Of course each one is famous. A minor accident bruising the arm or shoulder of one of these American idols would figure far more in the daily newspapers than the tragic death of the greatest scientist, philosopher, painter or composer in America or elsewhere. What is most astounding is that the President of the United States must cater to untutored punchers, as instanced by Coolidge's reception of Firpo, well named the "Bull of the Pampas", who on leaving the White House after an audience with the former President, asked one of his party in the only language he could speak, "Who was that guy"?

Dempsey was still more honored when former President Coolidge granted him the only interview on Washington's Birthday some years ago. Whether men of great achievement could be accorded so signal an honor is doubtful.

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I could refer to the princely salaries handed out to mediocre screen actors and actresses only because of their sex appeal, to the utter inability to appraise values on the part of the general public, to its gullibility and unreflectiveness, but sufficient evidence has already been adduced to clinch the issue and to demonstrate that the infantilization of America has been proceeding progressively, and that the country was fast becoming a nursery in spite of the colossal institutions of learning and art which have been built up at the same time.

Indeed, some of these very institutions have been criticized on various occasions for the emphasis laid by the administration on juvenile forms of behavior. The dominance of sports is only one phase of this infantilization, which has been condemned a few years ago by Ex-President Lowell of Harvard University, but there are other forms which reach into academic activities.

### WORK AND PLAY

The juveniles are having it all to themselves. Not only do they attract many adults to their sphere of interest (business men, lawyers, physicians, dentists, university men, not to mention the so-called white-collar army) but they are actually "running the show". You may be sitting in your own study and yet you are exposed to the pusillanimous and sickening Amos-Andy drivel from the loud speaker next door. You decide to attend a cinema, and you are treated to a veritable bedlam of destructive little figures, banging

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and chopping, squeaking and screeching, and doing all their grotesque stunts to the howling amusement of portly men and stately women, as well as the crowd of children, so that if you avoid the discomfiture in the newspapers, you are exposed to it, and must take it like a man, in the movie theatre. Tell me what amuses you, and I'll tell you what your mental status is. Main Street believes that if you cannot enjoy what amuses a baby, then surely you have no sense of humor.

The infantile character of many of the hit songs within the last few years — songs like "Three Little Piggies," "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?", "A-Tisket A-Tasket," "Three Little Fishies," and the many "mammy" and "baby" gems (e. g., "Yes-sir, she's my baby") which caught the fancy of pre-adolescent adults, bears testimony to the general argument presented in these pages.

I have heard the *ad nauseam* repeated couplet about "all work and no play" and also the puerile injunction about "a little nonsense now and then". What I question is not the validity of these implications, but rather the inference that what play or nonsense is necessary for me must be foisted upon me by youngsters. Surely there is a nonsense for different ages, and while we may like to amuse an infant by playing "horsey" with it, we should not be expected to indulge in this game as a pastime among adults only because a little nonsense is good for us now and then.

In a chain restaurant, a number of years ago in Montreal, I experienced a disgusting demonstration of

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what I took to be an initiation ceremony which included the throwing of bits of foods, napkins, and cutlery, shooting of pistols, emitting animal sounds, and other such stunts. The men were in the thirties and forties, and looked like shipping clerks or salesmen, who were out to make "whoopee" in a public place. They were not drunk; and occasionally a sheepish grin, as one of the other diners would eye them, brought out the expression of the inferiority complex which was responsible for the puerile behavior on the part of grown-ups.

There is, however, one point where many, if not most of our grown-up juveniles will differ with me. They will insist that in order to be happy we must become like children, and that the more we approximate them in our lighter moments, the happier we shall be. It is quite true that most of us do feel a hankering for the good old days of "readin' writin' and 'rithmetic", that like Conrad in Leonard Merrick's poignant novel, we hark back to the scenes of childhood, attempting to re-enact old situations, only to lapse into disillusionment. Many of the initiation rites in secret orders belong to this category. The horseplay and silly banter so common among those in menial positions are just signs of this juvenile exuberance. Had the excess energy been diverted into useful channels, as studying, reading, constructive work of some kind, the likelihood is that the hucksters and bootblacks and perpetual clerks would have stepped up a rung on the social and economic ladder.



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### REGRESSION

If the pubertal practices mentioned were confined only to those with limited intelligence, the dwellers of *Moronia*, our observations could hardly come under the head of this chapter. The point to be made is that until very recently, more and more grown-ups have become attracted to the call of the juvenile. Youth is refreshing, invigorating. There is something of the fever in youth, and no one can be blamed for allowing himself or herself to be enticed by its charms and allures, but as Longfellow says somewhere

*Youth comes but once in a lifetime*

and when we act the child long after our illusions are gone, we reveal ourselves in a ludicrous light, and betray, in this reversion to knickers which so many, innocent of golf-playing, affect, that something is amiss in our affective life. We are reaching for the phantom of the irrevocable past.

The psychoanalysts have a word for it: *Regression*. "Regression" has been defined in the standard *Dictionary of Psychology* as a "tendency on the part of the libido to revert to some channel of expression which belongs to an earlier phase of the libido development". In other words, according to this view, such individuals have not been able to adjust their sexual life properly and are compelled by the unconscious to hark back to infantile forms of behavior, somewhat disguised through symbolism. In the same recently published

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*Dictionary*, the term "regression" is defined sociologically and psychologically as "the tendency on the part of individual organisms, species, or societies, toward checking the effect of progress, by reverting to the mean or typical form."

If the psychoanalytic doctrine of "regression" is not accepted, because of its committing interpretation, certainly there can be no objection to the mere descriptive definition of the word; and in this definition, the phrase "toward checking the effect of progress" is rather significant. The juvenilization of the United States has been distinctly a step backwards; and perhaps a large portion of our present plight is to be ascribed to this regressive step.

The logical query which will be asked at this juncture is how, in the face of such a sociological process as the one described here, America has held the hegemony of the nations and has acquired the reputation of being the most progressive country on earth.

My answer is almost obvious. In the first place, there were always a sufficient number of Burbanks, Steinmetzes, Edisons, Goethalses, Fords, Schwabs, Taylors, Wrights, Michelsons and hundreds of others who worked to make up many times over for the juvenile adults who loafed and who are still enjoying themselves on their merry-go-round, deriving the wherewithal from the ever-multiplying rackets, in spite of the alleged poverty of the country.

## Chapter VI

# THE "NEW" PSYCHOLOGY



VI

THE "NEW" PSYCHOLOGY

There is a strange fascination in the word "new", which holds not only in the domain of fads and fashions, swing and culinary recipes, but even in the hallowed sphere of science. Every laymen, with keen expectancy, is just looking forward to the discovery of some new vitamin, or the report of some new cure, as if the novelty *per se* were a guarantee of its validity or effectiveness. "The last word" is the slogan of the milliner, the dressmaker, the real estate agent, and the luxury dispenser in general. If it's the last word, it must be the most excellent, the *ne plus ultra*, almost the *summum bonum* itself. Considering this human hankering, it is not to be wondered at that exponents should seize upon the newness of an opinion, doctrine, or event to arouse the interest of the public.

The term "new" is of course relative. We need not go so far as Ecclesiastes to deny that there is anything new under the sun. Let us concede that at times history is renovated, even if the renovation itself is merely a variation of an older order, that science at long intervals does turn a corner, and that once in a few decades we do come across something truly original. But to judge from the claims made by certain scientific writers, particularly of the popular kind, there is a new science being created almost every few years.

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We have heard of the new astronomy, the new mathematics (dealing with non-Euclidean space) perhaps even the new biology and the new geology, each time on the ground that some new, hitherto unrecognized, principle had been introduced which rendered all previous theories and views in the given science superannuated.

### THE CRITERION OF NEWNESS

The use of the word "new" is at best precarious in this respect because of the indefiniteness of the duration. And when applied to something fixed, like a building, it often brings to light in the course of time an amusing anachronism. Thus, New College at Oxford, while deserving its name in the sixteenth century, is from the angle of our twentieth century anything but aptly named. It is wise then to apply such an adjective only sparingly, even when it is appropriate in many cases, as in the days of Galileo, Copernicus, and even of Darwin. The quantum theory and the relativity deductions that emanated from it assuredly entitled the system of physics which was based on them to be regarded as a "new" physics. What particularly favored such a concession was the fact that the new physics did not supplant the old "new physics" in the life-span of an individual.

Psychology has never had any Galileos, Newtons or Copernicuses. Since the days of Aristotle not a dent

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had been made in it until a pillar of the Reformation, Melanchthon, in the year 1550, decided to use the word "psychologia" in one of his lectures. It was merely a verbal matter, but an innovation at least since Aristotle's *De Anima*. The next turn was brought about by Christian Wolf in the early part of the eighteenth century when he instituted the division of Rational Psychology and Empirical Psychology. Then came Fechner about a hundred years ago with his psychophysical law, which placed the as yet not founded science of psychology on a new level. It is Wilhelm Wundt who, by the establishment of the first laboratory for the recording and measurement of mental reactions, in 1879, (it is sometimes claimed that William James was really the first experimental psychologist) merits the reputation of having given birth to the new psychology.

Thus the "new psychology" may be said to have come into being a little over fifty years ago, and apparently it took some time before its novelty wore off, for in 1897, the Yale psychologist, E. W. Scripture, becomes the exponent of this new psychology, and in later editions, his *The New Psychology* was still an appropriate title.

### PSYCHOLOGY AND PHYSICS

For about a dozen years, less than half a generation, the "new psychology" was in no danger of a usurper. About this time, however, Freud's psychoanalysis had caught the fancy of practitioner and layman alike, even

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making its incursions into the *aulae* of the academic psychologist, so that when the Viennese master was invited to participate in the festivities of Clark University in 1919, by the far-sighted Stanley Hall, Freud's system was hailed as the "new psychology".

Again it must be allowed that the title was in a sense justified, in spite of the fact that it seemed altogether too soon for the "new psychology" of the laboratory to have outlived its usefulness. But there is the rub! In every other science, the *adoption of a new set of principles actually signifies the overturn of the old system*, and not merely that the new doctrine is taking the foreground in the economy of the science.

Not so with psychology. When psychoanalysis made its decisive advent as if to stay, it did not and could not make short shrift of experimental psychology. Whether we are disposed to regard Sigmund Freud as the Copernicus of the mental sciences or not, and even if we are prone to regard our conscious world as moving around the unconscious "sun", it is still incontestable that the system of psychology inaugurated by Fechner and Wundt is here to remain. Even if no longer enjoying the zest of its prime, it is very far from ceding ground to any "newer" psychology.

Scarcely had Freudianism made its influence felt in academic circles, when lo and behold, another "new psychology" sprang up — in the form of behaviorism, the gist of its contention being: There is no psychology, no mind; nor are there images, perceptions, or feelings, but merely muscle and gland reactions, con-



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stituting in their totality the behavior of an organism. In the last analysis, then, the "new psychology" consists, paradoxically enough, in denying its existence. If Descartes stirred up the thinking world by his dictum *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) then his antipode of the twentieth century arouses the non-thinking world by the vociferous slogan *non cogito ergo non est*. But I am not concerned here with the value or validity of behaviorism, having dealt with this theory extensively in two separate books (*Behaviorism and Psychology* and *Behaviorism at 25*). Suffice it to say here that neither in name (except for the suffix of "ism" which any grammar school boy could add) nor in method is it new. The very title of McDougall's popular book, which appeared in 1912, reads *Psychology: The Study of Behavior*.

Long before the high priest of behaviorism, J. B. Watson, was born, the French philosophers Cournot and Comte aired the same grievance against the appeal to consciousness and introspection for scientific purposes; and psychologists were conducting experiments along the lines suggested by behaviorists nowadays. The very researches of Pavlov and Bekhterev in Russia which had contributed the foundation to American behaviorism and spurred its leaders to entertain more enthusiastic visions, are proof of the lack of novelty in the behavioristic procedure.

The din of behavioristic propaganda had scarcely died down when a new "new psychology" loomed on the horizon, this time hailing from Germany. I am

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referring to the much advertised *Gestalt* psychology, which maintains that mental experiences are not composed of elements but are in themselves configurations, deriving their significance from the relation of pattern to ground.

The *Gestalt* psychology possesses some new features, particularly in its experimental settings, which had not occurred to the *ante-bellum* workers, but to call it a new psychology is about as apposite as dubbing the player piano a new instrument. Many years ago when psychology was really brand new, William James told us emphatically in bold characters that "The perceptive state of mind is not a compound", that it does not involve a "'fusion' of separate sensations and ideas". Ebbinghaus, who was a nativist in his psychology, that is to say, believed that our complex perceptions were not built up of more elementary cues as Wundt did, for the most part, had already anticipated many of the new views on space perception. We are put in mind of the old paradox: "If you want new ideas, read old books; if you want old ideas, read new books". Exaggerated as this saying is, there is no denying that many of our proponents of new doctrines and systems might have, with advantage, first looked into the works of their predecessors.

Nor is *Gestalt* psychology by any means the last or latest claimant in the series of new psychologies. Probably the late Alfred Adler, with his misnamed "Individual Psychology", would not have declined the compliment! And, turning again to Germany, there are

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two Jaensch brothers, who view the mental world through the colored spectacles of eidetic imagery. Now they see it through the brown glasses of a Nazi ideology. To them and their followers, doubtless, psychology begins and ends with eidetic imagery and the constitutional make-up going with it, a view colored by the racist doctrine current in Germany. Now far be it from me to gainsay that certain individuals, particularly children, can see in their mind's eye quite clearly an object which has been removed from their gaze — which is after all what eidetic imagery is; nay more I should willingly concede that there are these two distinct types of people, the one with bulging eyes, almost popping out of their sockets, and the other characterized by the immobile features and restrained expression exemplified by Calvin Coolidge. For all that, these observations do not warrant the setting up of a new psychology.

Short as the intervals are between the "new" psychologies, apparently not all psychologists are inclined to think so; for it has occurred to one enterprising psychologist of Clark University to inaugurate a sort of psychological exposition or fair every five years. It is not psychology but *psychologies* that are offered for selection; and to judge from the results, this psychological "*piatiletko*" is a huge success. For in 1925, when *The Psychologies of 1925* appeared, there were only six different schools represented, while *The Psychologies of 1930* contained not only about 100,000

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words more than the preceding volume, but had twelve schools for a showing. At this rate *The Psychologies* of 1940 should offer us at least forty-eight schools. The series was discontinued, however, not because of a lack of schools, but for — shall we say — forensic reasons. It is possible to list 48 different schools, since all one need do in order to be a founder of a school nowadays is to think of a theory and then label it as a system under some polysyllabic term.

With such prosperity in the offing, it is quite conceivable that the five-year basis will become an altogether too long-drawn out period for eager psychologists, and a move will eventually be made to get out annual editions of *Psychologies* comparable to, and in line with, the *Follies*, *Vanities*, *Scandals* and *Frivolities*; and while this may seem nothing but a joke to most readers, I am afraid that there is more truth than pleasantry in the tendency, or direction at least, of impatience with the old, so patent in modern scientific circles.

Hardly need we be surprised at the skepticism shown toward psychology by the layman who wants to know whether there is at all such a study as psychology; and many are the wisecracks and "smart Aleckisms" brought out by former students of psychology at its expense. There is no science, not even sociology, which has aroused so much misgiving in the mind of the educated public as psychology. The sophisticated professional, on being apprised that his interlocutor is a psychologist, will ask with a mischievous twinkle in

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his eye whether psychology is a game or an art. He may declare that he has never studied the subject — waiting until there is a body of accepted facts to study. Perhaps you can recommend a book to him which will not be wholly contradicted by another book in the same field. The only literature he has read thus far on the subject, you learn, is that written by notorious quacks.

### DIFFERENCE IN TERMINOLOGY

Actually there is no justification for the wave of cynicism which has followed in the wake of psychoanalysis. Furthermore every major school which has formed lately in the science has its place as a cog in the wheel, or, perhaps better, as a branch of a tree. It is only when one branch seeks to usurp the status of the whole tree that we are reminded of the tail wagging the dog.

When we wish to establish the similarity of the various psychologies on the market, we need only examine the textbooks for the last decade. In most cases, even the arrangement of the material is the same. The treatment is nearly alike in all, except that the pet phrases and slogans of the school to which the author belongs are surreptitiously, and often irrelevantly, introduced. As to Watson's textbook, the only difference between the conventional one and his seems to be that whatever is explained by James, McDougall, Wundt, Titchener, Münsterberg, Kuelpe or Ebbinghaus in a positive manner, Watson will explain in just

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the opposite way. Children come into the world with innate dispositions, say they. The child has practically no native tendencies, proclaims Watson. We have all been under the impression that mental imagery is a fact. "Oh, no", says the behaviorist, pure and simple, "it's all muscular sensation".

As time goes on, it becomes more and more obvious that what we need in psychology is fewer *schools* and more *schooling*. We have apparently not yet learnt the method of birth control in our academic household. The hankering for system-building has cluttered up the science with labels and trademarks, so that a listing of all of them would require a little book. Some schools are referred to by synonyms, *e. g.*, *hormic* and *purposive*; *Gestalt* and *configurational*, while others going under one name, such as *functionalism*, *behaviorism*, *organismic psychology*, etc., comprise anywhere from 5 to 57 varieties. In some cases, the label does not suit the particular brand. There is no more reason why Adler's "Individual Psychology" is any more the psychology of the whole individual than, for example, Jung's "Analytic Psychology". Each prospector is eager to clinch his claim by advertising his title. The real founders of the science *per contra* had no thought of the denomination. The name of the school evolved as a matter of course almost impersonally, and like a folk song, one scarcely knows who was its originator or whence it came. It will also be recalled that the great masterpieces in symphonic music were never encumbered by descriptive titles.

## The "New" Psychology

### THE PROOF LIES AHEAD OF US

Memorable will be the day when a symposium experiment will be conducted in some institution on a vital problem of human psychology from the angles of several different schools. Suppose the behaviorist tackles it in one way, the purposive psychologist in another, and so on. Will the results be different? If psychology is a genuine science, the facts should be the same, regardless of the methods employed, just as in mathematics, the correct solution will never be anything but correct, by whatever method arrived at.

That is just what I wish to maintain. There is only one science of psychology although there are many methods, many theories and schools. The trunk of the great tree had taken root thousands of years ago. The "new" psychologies of today are only branches that bid fair to conceal from view the stout trunk that was already in existence at the time of Aristotle. The "new" psychology is as old as mankind, nay even older, for even the brutes make use of psychology in their adjustment to life.

We have gained a great deal more insight into things, we have made remarkable progress along the lines of application. Our laboratories have furthered our knowledge tenfold. The ingenuity of our experimental methods is in every way established, but there is a good deal in the *Anthropologie* of Kant, in the *Common Sense* observations of the Scotch school, not to mention the monumental textbooks of James, Wundt

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and Ebbinghaus, which will bear examination today; and furthermore, there is much in the so-called new psychologies of today which will with justice be forgotten in a few decades. The "new" psychologists of every brand and variety will do well, before spurning their predecessors, to attempt to fit the new results into the old and established framework wherever and whenever possible.



## Chapter VII

# PSYCHOLOGY vs. TECHNOCRACY



## VII

# TECHNOLOGICAL FASCISM AND PSYCHOLOGY

### FOREWORD

How forgetful, fickle, even fitful the groove-like mind of the average person, collectively incorporated in the term "masses", can be is evident from the fact that the mention of the word "Technocracy" today will produce little more than a blank expression — as if the term meant something in the distant past, but now possesses merely the faintest shadow of some sense or other. "Technocracy, technocracy", the puzzling look will signify, "Where did I hear that word before?"

Yet it is only several years ago that the sound of technocracy kept ringing in our ears day in, day out, that newspapers and magazines were filling tons and tons of paper with expositions and refutations of the principle involved; and books on technocracy were coming out at the rate of two or three a year; and journals were devoted entirely to the discussion of this impressive sounding doctrine. It was in 1934 that the build-up of technocracy reached its peak.

The decline was sharp. As if by prearranged plan, the subject was suddenly dropped; and editors refused to print articles on technocracy that they themselves had ordered. I am not prepared to say what it was that precipitated the reversed attitude. Was it the split in

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the ranks of the leading technocrats? Or did the masses become fed up on the visionary idea; or was it simply the natural result of a fad running its course?

Whatever the cause, the fact remains still that the psychological view has never been presented; and since, for all we know, the doctrine may still be revived, based as it is on the sound revolutionary foundation of equity, we ought to examine it once and for all, from the psychological angle; for it is evident that the human approach is the gateway to the realization of any idea or movement.

Although the tenet of technocracy is grounded in a revolutionary postulate (equity) its rule would certainly constitute a species of fascism, hence the title of the present chapter "Technological Fascism and Psychology". If technocracy had its day, then, under the guise of science, it could impose ironclad laws which would permit of no questioning. Its dictatorship would be just as inexorable as Mussolini's; and just as the hard-boiled system in USSR is softened by the phrase "of the proletariat", so technocracy would probably be dignified as the "dictatorship of science".

The problem of technocracy has more than historical interest for us. It still has its votaries; and its protagonists, like Professor Scott, have never given it up, but seem to work quietly, biding their time. Of course, there is no question but that technocracy has had its fling in the press, on the stage, and in the cinema hall, but it is equally true that its apparent oblivion is undeserved.

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### THE SITUATION IN 1933

It is no longer necessary to start by defining the term technocracy, for even Macaulay's proverbial schoolboy has a fairly good idea of what the word means. In an avalanche of articles and discussions we have been told that only technocracy can save the world from utter collapse; and in order to make the remedy seem more impressive or compelling, we are treated to a veritable magazine of explosives warning us of what is bound to happen, if we allow matters to take their own course. Ossa on Pelion is piled up to show us the writing on the wall. Figures running into 12 and 13 digits are strung in line and reeled off to stagger and stupefy us into obeisance to the majesty of the technocrat, who, in ordinary language, is an engineer of one sort or another, with a bent for transforming the economic order, not along the lines of socialism or communism, but on the basis of charts, graphs and tables.

The conclusions sound very simple, except for the rows of figures which smack of an advanced multiplication table. So many pounds of iron per hour in 1900, so many millions of pounds in 1920, so many billions in 1930. So many pairs of shoes per minutes in 1912, so many hundreds of thousands in 1932, and so the calculation drags monotonously on.

Little boots it that these computations and forecasts are discredited by non-technocratic experts in their respective fields as grossly inaccurate. After all,

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when dealing with billions and trillions and geometric progressions one is bound to get discrepancies. But the technocrats still have a cause, and "researching" is their long suit, and the world of figures is their happy hunting-ground.

### ECONOMICS AND DEPRESSION

To be sure, one cannot find fault with investigations of energy production and consumption. The figures actually obtained, not merely estimated, will undoubtedly be of service in shaping the general attitude toward our condition and reconstruction, but the transition from arithmetic to economics, history and psychology, sociology and legislation is not as easy and graceful as our technocrats seem to believe; even though the economist has been compelled to cede his position as arbiter in all sociological matters from economics to legislation. The resigned, almost pathetic, declaration recently made by the Governor of the Bank of England should open our eyes to the fact that the economists in spite of their prestige and awe-inspiring pronouncements were not only far from being heavily armored, but could scarcely be regarded as even half-clad.

Economics was, and still is, considered the most practical of sciences. In the Eastern universities, thousands of young men flock to the "ec" classes to learn how to handle the money which their "old men", without knowledge of Carlyle's dismal science, earned for them so lavishly to spend. Came the world crisis, and

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the solid science of wealth and its distribution revealed itself as helpless in solving the difficulty, or even accounting for the situation as adequately as the abstract and speculative study of philosophy. It was evident that economics no longer reigned as the science of world affairs.

The technocrats were just waiting for an opportunity to magnify their promises; and in a state of turmoil every new remedy is seized upon by a suffering public, just as when in pain, one is constantly changing his position and posture.

Technocracy takes up two strategic points; on the one hand, it threatens us with the bogey-man, who single-handed will run a whole plant, whereupon millions of us must be doomed to permanent unemployment; on the other hand, we are promised, because of the technical perfection which the world is asymptotically approaching, a paradise of leisure and luxury compared with which the utopias and dreams of Jules Verne and Edward Bellamy must pale into insignificance. Fifteen hours a week and a standard of living now obtainable only on an income of \$20,000 a year for every Tom, Dick and Harry ! The politicians could "guarantee" only a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage. To the technocrats such a vision is but cheating oneself to the  $n$ th degree, as in Peretz's famous story of Bontche asking for a buttered roll every morning, when told by the Celestial Tribunal that as a reward for his (non-voluntary) martyrdom in this world he could choose anything he wished in Paradise.

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The billions of suits of clothes and pairs of shoes, the hundreds of miles of automobiles ready to be shipped, the gigantic edifices about to be built up, the whole picture of fabulous plenty, are in poignant contrast with the misery of today. In spite of the frenzied pace of production within the last twenty years, most people have hardly one pair of shoes for their feet, and a single suit for their back and scarcely enough food to keep body and soul together.

The contention of technocracy is naturally that because too much has been produced, there is a greater supply than demand, consequently there is no need of workers; hence there is no money to buy the necessities of life with. Therefore the price system must go and a new standard of exchange set up which, it is intimated, should be some form of energy.

The first question that occurs to anyone is, whether with all our feverish productivity we are able to attend to the wants of the world's population; and surely now we can no longer talk in terms of territorial concern, for more and more are we beginning to realize that each country is only a part of the huge "Leviathan", as Hobbes long ago conceived it, and that even a pain or disorder in the little toe of this world-monster would affect every other part and eventually disable the whole organism. It strikes one that many of the danger signals which the technocrats are sounding are of the nature of apprehensions about the entropy of the world. We are reminded of the nervous listener at a physicist's lecture which stressed the catastrophe in consequence



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of the exhaustion of the sun's energy some fifty million years hence.

"How many years did you say?" interrupted an excited little man of the audience in a panicky voice.

"Fifty million", answered the lecturer.

"Oh my!" the auditor heaved an audible sigh of relief, while his hand was still on his chest, "I thought your said, 'fifteen million.'"

### RECKONING WITHOUT THE HOST

The imagination of the technocrats is vivid enough, and indeed, almost boundless; but it keeps soaring in a straight line. There is no attempt made to imagine the situation *in full*. One may easily visualize the running of a plant automatically with one man at a switch-board, but even then the construction of such a plant, the training, the inspection, the protection, the frequent overhauling, etc., would afford employment to certainly more than a few persons. What technocracy has failed to take into account is that the pyramiding of performances and activities reaches in time a *technical limit*, and that no matter how well our plans are laid, we must resort to *human aid* in the long run.

Yes, it is the *human factor*, the psychological element of our make-up, both individual and social, that technocracy has blissfully ignored. Even the economists have not altogether disregarded the mental foundations of their science. That genius of political economy, David Ricardo, over a century ago declared that "the

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economic man is a bundle of desires" and more recently the Austrian school of economists, Menger, von Wieser and particularly Böhm-Bawerk have recognized in *value* a psychological relationship between an individual and an object. If value is relative, as the technocrats offishly point out, it is only because *all human needs and desires are relative*.

To attempt to transform value into an absolute and fixed entity is like standardizing the needs of man, which is as much of an impossibility as inventing a *perpetuum mobile*, and for the same reason, *viz.*, the principle is false *ab initio*.

Technocracy, like every technical theory, proceeds as if the world were a world of mass, energy and mathematical relations only. In their own field, engineers might overlook everything else and yet successfully build bridges, construct aqueducts, electrify towns, and so forth, but when it comes to revolutionizing a social system, the warp and woof of which is composed of instincts and emotions, motives and desires, pleasures and pains, the technologist, even if he happens to dabble in social problems, is fitted neither by nature nor by preparation to undertake a project on such a vast and significant scale as leading society into "The Promised Land."

To take a single instance of technocracy's psychic blindness in this connection, it has never recognized the likelihood of *people's tastes becoming more and more diversified and fastidious with increasing leisure*, which is the necessary goal of society according to technocrats,

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so that new channels of productivity will be found and exploited, thus necessitating an army of new workers. We have all witnessed the shift of interest from the talking machine to the radio. *The further advanced our technical apparatus, the shorter the period for any invention to engage our attention* and the sooner will these shifts be brought about from one technical commodity to another.

It may even be said that the technocrats have not applied their imagination to their own sphere; for it has not dawned upon them that as our production increases in an almost geometric ratio, our natural resources (timber, coal, oil) will be exhausted. Artificial substitutes will be required and this new form of alchemy will be a means of employing millions of people.

### THE NOVELTY IN TECHNOCRACY

Technocracy could possibly forecast productivity, *if people were robots, if there were no such thing as a human factor*, but constituted as we are, with desires and needs multiplying in proportion to our possessions and leisure, any predictions on the basis of factory and plant output are fatuous. The technocrats are just about as far from the scientific target as their antipodes, the physiocrats, who, a century and a half ago, saw the salvation of the world only in agriculture.

Technocracy has girt its loins to smash the price system. Long before Howard Scott, dean of techno-

crats, was born, John Owen and Charles Fourier, Marx and Engels, Lassalle and Rodbertus had a good deal to say about the vicious circle of modern finance, its speculations and hazards; but the relationship between technological measurement and remuneration apparently escaped them, although they all realized that prices and wages should be a function of *human energy*; yes, *human energy*, not cosmic energy because, in the first place, it cannot be really measured, and secondly because, although human energy is one phase or mode of cosmic energy, the measurement of cosmic energy bears only a remote relationship to the crux of the whole situation, *viz.*, value.

When technocrats impassionately cry "What has that price to do with the exact measurement of that electric current?" we must retort with the question, "And what has the exact measurement of that electric current to do with its value as measured by our desire or need?" To a Simon Stylites the perfect incandescent lamp is worthless, and to the various orders of religious devotees all the glamors of Radio City are meaningless.

For technocrats, the absoluteness of the measure is on the way to being apotheosized into a Hegelian Absolute. Most assuredly an ampere of electricity is always an ampere, and even a yard of cotton is always (more or less) a yard; but all this is a splendid illustration of the *ignoratio elenchi* or "missing the point" fallacy. The very drawback in our whole social life is the relativity of value, and value is relative because our desires, our needs, our constitutional wants are *relative*;

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and all the measurements in the world will not alter that fact and make out of our affective life a series of invariables. Our desires and needs will not become standard or fixed entities, if we discovered that the world contained 999 decillion horsepower or ergs.

### FALLACIES AND PARADOXES

The value of an article oscillates not only because of economic conditions, but because our *mental attitude* changes; and technocracy, with all its quantitative conquests, cannot overcome this fluctuating mental attitude not only in society but even in the individual. It is my contention that *available energy and mental attitude, or even specific human energy, are not comparable*, because they are on different planes.

The lobsidedness of technocratic theory or rather speculation is amazing. One obtains from it the idea that the only quality in wearing apparel and other commodities which people are seeking is durability. Ramie is introduced as a type of material which wears seven times better than wool, as if with our progressive standards, we are eager to wear the same suit of clothes or dress for a whole lifetime.

Even such a supposedly permanent and relatively expensive commodity as furniture is changed once every decade in fairly modest homes. What allowance does technocracy make for changing fads and fashions, vogues and tastes? The truth is that *the more "technified" our world becomes, the more of a tendency is*

*there to crave, by way of distinction, those goods which are not machine-made.* With all the millions of suits on display in the haberdasheries of the country, and in spite of the dirt-cheap prices, the individual with taste and a moderate income will prefer to pay anywhere from 25 to 40 dollars more for a tailored suit. "Hand-made" is the watchword of the better-to-do classes. Naturally if these classes are reduced in number, the demand, although not the craving, for the superior quality of make will be reduced; but under a reasonable readjustment of our present economic system, there should be an approximately equal ratio of supply and demand.

Even the threatening razor blade which, it is claimed, will last a lifetime is not to be erected into a sword of Damocles. That it may last a lifetime may be assumed readily enough; that it will cut just as smoothly after a few years, particularly without sharpening, as at the beginning of its career may well be questioned. Unless a sample blade has been actually tried over a couple of decades, the prediction is only guesswork, something like the life-expectation of any given individual.

Technocracy defines science as "the methodology of the determination of the most probable", but it grounds this probability, with reference to social objectives, in a quagmire of uncertainty, and as is well known, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The simple facts of mental life cannot be made to disappear in the barrage of words and phrases like "energy con-

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version" and "basic metrical relationships". Human desires and impulses may be arbitrary and fickle, but they are concrete. Technological theories may be mathematically exact, but they are abstract and home-spun.

### THE MYSTERIOUS SUBSTITUTE FOR THE PRICE SYSTEM

If there is anything original about technocracy, it is the abolition not of profits, but of the price system or monetary exchange, which is the "root of all evil". So far, however, no one has succeeded in surmising what will take the place of the dollar or pound or mark in paying for commodities. What is to be the substitute for the price system?

The most logical thing is of course to pay in terms of energy which, in the last analysis, is meant to be the rationale and source of the payment; and this step seems to be the one hinted at by technocracy, but in what manner the exchange will be made can hardly be imagined, since all the factors involved are variable, with the result that the situation would scarcely be more equitable than it is now. The energy of a husky policeman can certainly not be compared with that of a Keats or a Spinoza. I once saw an adult "bus-boy" in a lunch room who was a veritable dynamo. He probably was pathologically driven. Perhaps then such an individual would be rolling in luxury because of his boundless energy; and although in Technocratia, no

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bus-boy could be visualized, since his duties would be carried out electrically, yet the amount of energy in an individual of this type would be the same.

Consider the qualities which determine price today; supply, demand, skill or talent, the instrumentality of reducing discomfort. In what way would these factors be integrated in the energy exchange system? How convert skill into energy or time into talent? This mystery for the present is insoluble.

### POLITICIANS OVER TECHNOCRATIA

If technocracy has revealed an utter failure to grasp the fundamentals of the social situation, it has shown an even greater childish *naïveté* in envisaging the political future.

Hitherto every revolution, whether of the sanguinary or the bloodless type, has been brought about by the emotional swaying of the masses on the part of leaders against the *de facto* regime. Not systems changed hands but individuals, politicians. Dictator followed dictator. True revolutionaries were either the pawn in the game (paw in the fire) or else, once established in power, assumed a reactionary attitude.

The Russian revolution is no exception. The communistic system is carried on in the USSR with capitalistic weapons but, as is well known, with greater restrictions. Technocracy apparently calls the masses to overturn the present system on the ground that it does not work, and pleads with the capitalists, politi-



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cians, and rulers to give up their millions and luxuries and offices, because it will be for the good of the rest of mankind — another variant of *Ducky, Ducky, come and be killed*.

The technocrats assume that the masses can be convinced by purely rational appeals, and that the financier-politician-executive group can be persuaded by moral preachments. If Ford and Pierpont Morgan will eventually have to give up their fortunes, they can at least afford to wait until "the evil of the day"; and since they will ever remain skeptical about the "writing on the wall" and the prophesied calamity which it bodes, their attitude, in the face of all technocratic admonitions, may well be represented by the famous dictum: *Après moi le déluge*.

As for the masses, what prospect is there of their embracing and fighting for an innovation so radical when even a mild form of socialism is repugnant to them, and its theory beyond their ken? What, above all, even if the masses should be won over to the cause of technocracy, is the chance of the government accepting it, when it was so difficult to exorcize from our midst an ultra-stupid measure like prohibition, in spite of the "will" of the people? And if technocracy should succeed in coming into power, it would soon realize that all the turbines and steam-shovels in the world could not begin to excavate the natural stupidity and selfish motives of the bulk of mankind.

At the height of technocratic interest, in 1934, the newspapers reported a rift in the technocratic group.

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This event is proof positive of the psychological priority over technocratic calculations. If, at this stage of the game, dissension arises, we may well imagine what disagreements the future has in store for us. The political obstacle is not yet acute because the whole project is far from realization, but already the question has been put to a professor by a naturalization commissioner in Oklahoma City relative to his belief in communism, socialism, anarchism, or technocracy.

To sum up: technocracy, making allowance for the gross exaggerations, some of which have already been punctured by experts in their respective fields, is first of all not realisable because of the ruling forces, and then again would be impracticable, even if realisable. It is inapplicable to human values because it ignores the core of social psychology. As a panacea for the world's problems, technocracy has nothing definitely constructive to offer. Its main asset is the spotlight which it has trained on a few problems generally glossed over by economics.

It is not the dollar which is at fault so much as the manipulation of the dollar. If the weeds of our political (graft, fraud, lobbyism, favoritism, spoils system, patronage, etc.) and economic life were exterminated, and if a restriction on excessive profits were imposed by legislation and literally carried out by the administrative machine, there would be no need to substitute joules or ergs as units of compensation, while with all the intrigues, chicanery and rackets incidental to our business and political life, there is no guarantee that

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technocracy will satiate the greed of most people or prevent the crying injustices of the aggressive and shrewd against the submissive and simple-minded. The same persons who today amass millions will seek thousands of millions in luxury and possessions; and nothing will prevent the same powerful or influential individuals who enter into shady deals with others, in order to defraud the public, from cheating the same public under the technocratic system.

We may expect a good deal more from truly representative and fair legislation, supported by rigorous enforcement and Draconian treatment of malefactors whether they be small-time racketeers or magnates close to the White House; and it is encouraging to see signs of reform in this direction, emanating from Washington.



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Chapter VIII  
THE QUACK IN PSYCHOLOGY

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## VIII

### THE QUACK IN PSYCHOLOGY

If the world is made up as the cynics would have us believe, of knaves and fools, it becomes almost as difficult a problem to establish the priority of these two classes as the other pair famous in proverbial lore. But perhaps the difficulty is due to the supposition that the two mutually exclude each other. In our elementary logic course we have learnt long ago that the statement "A is either a fool or a knave" does not preclude him from being both. And modern psychology or rather, to be more accurate, psychoanalysis, rather emphasizes the duality of human nature even in cases which have commonly been held to permit of no ambivalence. The tyrant, who is at bottom a slave; the militant prude, who is repressing his or her inordinate libido; the fanatical prohibitionist, who is struggling against the bibulous undertow, are only a few illustrations of this doctrine of duality. The sharper and the sucker, on this theory, may in fact reside in the same body; and when we consider the multitude of slick salesmen who are in their turn duped by others no shrewder than themselves, we begin to wonder whether there are after all two types or classes of men, and whether, therefore, the search after the origins of knavery has any point.

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Nevertheless if an inquiry into the beginning of roguery is futile, there can be no doubt that the history of quackery would have the greatest value; for of all human endeavors it may boast the longest past. Like an eternal stowaway it manages to reach its haven without effort or expense. Nay more, the particular vessel may have met disaster in the race of progress, it may have foundered, (like many a science in the Middle Ages) yet quackery clings to the wreckage and floats until it falls in with another vessel. Thus, in a sense, the history of quackery reflects the history of culture. It represents, to be sure, only the seamy side of science, nevertheless as a lining of the intellectual garb, it has always matched to a certain extent the texture, shape and dimensions of its super-structure.

### THE SHADOW OF SCIENCE

A comprehensive history of quackery on an encyclopedic scale would not only limn for us the scientific *underworld* in all its sordid nebulosity, but, in addition, it would present an outline of the landmarks in the history of progress; for every new science, every fresh discovery, every new invention would be adapted to serve the needs of the universal and ubiquitous charlatan. If intelligence is to be defined as adaptability, as the majority of American psychologists hold (the present writer not included), then the highest I. Q. should be accorded to the quack in our midst. Pragmatically, too, he is in a restricted sense, putting an idea to work, and it *does* work in the long run, at



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least for himself. With his Midas touch, he turns every mental value into valuable metal. For him cash is the only value which counts. While the romantic alchemists in their attic laboratories were seeking the philosopher's stone, he already possessed it. The quack is the embodiment of *will* (conation) ever competing with *intellect*, which represents science. Science explores, mines, prospects, — quackery claims the reward. Culture exploits nature and quackery exploits culture. To be sure, the triumph is wholly practical, but this is all the quack is concerned about. What he has set out to do he has accomplished. He takes the cash and lets the credit go.

In order to trade upon the ignorance and — worse than ignorance — the utter lack of discrimination of the masses, quackery always takes its cue from developments in the world of knowledge. For this reason, quackery may serve as a sort of barometer to reveal the "precipitation" of knowledge in any given period. Religion, in various forms, has always provided a fertile field for the shaman, miracle man, faith healer, and dispenser of favors on behalf of the Deity. Five thousand years ago, in Babylon and Egypt, interest in the stars gave birth to astrology — probably our most ancient pseudo-science. In the early Renaissance, the researches in drugs by a number of brilliant physicians ushered in a rejuvenation craze and a mad scramble for an elixir of life. The dawn of chemistry was responsible for the persistent endeavors to transmute baser metals into gold. (In opposition to the general belief,

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I hold that alchemy was not the forerunner of chemistry, but was in itself the sign that the era of chemical thinking had begun.) The rise of physiology with Haller, and investigations into the structure of the brain, brought on the crudities of phrenology, once a legitimate speculation, now merely another variety of quackery. The exploitation of electricity provided the sharper with a new medium and a useful terminology ("positive," "negative," "polarity," "vibrations"), just as the wonders of radio and television are responsible for such phrases as "tuning in with the Infinite."

### PSYCHOLOGY AND "PSEUDOSOPHY"

Thus it appears that every science has contributed to the lingo or jargon of the "pseudosophist." (I have adopted the word *pseudosophy* to designate the whole body of organized mock-knowledge; in other words, of blatant ignorance, which has accumulated through the ages.) But, as might be expected, no field has offered richer opportunities to the quack than that of psychology. The potency of the mind was stretched to the point of omnipotence by a number of cults and sects long before the days of Mrs. Eddy or Mr. Quimby, and before Freud's coinage "Omnipotence of Thought" as a designation for the compulsive behavior of certain neurotics, was even dreamt of. If mind governs all things, and psychology is the science of mind, it stands to reason that a vast structure of irrationality would almost inevitably be erected upon one or two common observations in psychology.

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Another reason for the vim and delight with which the charlatan has seized upon psychology is the very intangible and illusory nature of the subject. While the tyro in physics, astronomy, or geology was invariably liable to exposure, the quack in psychology could always cloak his ignorance in glib prattle about human nature. Having come in contact with different types of people, he makes various individuals serve as universal models, and thus is able to back up his dogmatic generalizations by an appearance of proof.

The advent of psychoanalysis has been a veritable boon to the pseudosophist. Many years ago Freud foresaw what was bound to happen when his doctrines spread among the laity. On returning to Europe after taking part in the decennial anniversary festivities of the founding of Clark University, the fêted — and, in a sense, fated — chieftain, flanked by his able lieutenant, Jung, and by his other aides, Ferenczi and Ernest Jones, reflected sadly on the imminent parasitism of the quack upon the branch of psychoanalysis. Plans were discussed to forestall any such imposition, but what are plans in the face of two such irresistible affinities as quackery and the science of the mind? With the advent of Freud and psychoanalysis, the whole region of the subconscious acquired an air of respectability which it was hitherto denied in educated circles. A magazine of terms — repression, libido, transference, compensation, and the like — was added to the quack's vocabulary. Books by the score and articles in the hundreds appeared, and continue to appear, on "how to harness

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the subconscious," and "how the salesman is to appeal to the unconscious." I can even anticipate some day seeing a title such as: "What We Haven't Got, And How To Use It Most Effectively." Freud's pessimism was only too well founded.

### INROADS OF THE QUACK

Now, whatever the causes, it is fully established that this country is overrun with a small army of fakers and semi-fakers of all varieties. Psychology, alas, seems to have polarized all the cranks, quacks, and faddists who in the past gathered together under the banners of hypnotism, mesmerism, animal magnetism, Yoga mysticism, New Thought, Higher Thought, phrenology, occultism, and the rest. Not that these pseudologies have ceased to function under their own name and in their own right. Without losing their identities they have all gravitated in the direction of psychology — the recognized science most adaptable to their purposes. Their stock-in-trade consists of phrases like "secret forces," "hidden powers," "ageless wisdom," "subliminal reserves," "transcendental depths," "telesthenia," "transliminality," "mental transference," and "astral colors." These, with a hodgepodge of metaphors and similes borrowed from household devices ("self-starter" and "loud-speaker") and the snappy language of the street ("getability") form an imposing array of terms. John Selden has said that "syllables govern mankind," and certainly the quack's use of word-magic goes a long way to explain his rise to fame and fortune.

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With such ammunition and with the newspapers and magazines as the mediums of well-organized propaganda in the form of high-powered sales talks promising the moon and stars, with colored advertisements calculated to appeal to the naïve egotist who believes that now is his chance to get what he wants without effort or merit on his part — is it surprising that this orgy of intellectual debauchery is swaying and undermining the morale of the country? The young woman who in the fall of 1928 horrified millions of readers by her incoherent story of self-immolation because of her connection with some cult, supposedly deriving its tenets from psychology, is not a solitary case, but merely an intensified one. Fortunately, tragic occurrences of such magnitude are rare in the intellectual underworld. In all duperies, however, the consequences are sufficiently grievous to compel the thoughtful person to examine the methods of the itinerant and self-constituted "psychologists." Even presumably reputable men should be investigated, for in many instances the magic words "Doctor of Psychoanalysis" have been bestowed by correspondence colleges of questionable standing. (In Oklahoma, the Rosicrucian "mysteries" and Hindu Swami cults, with their psychological background, are said to have invaded even the highest offices in the state.)

Although each quack plies his or her game individually — and the eternal feminine is well represented — they collectively abet and lend support to each other through the accumulated effect of their enormous

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advertising and publicity campaigns. All together, they constitute an unorganized body formidable in its predatory capacity. I should estimate that close to a million dollars a month is spent on publicity by this psychological troupe. Some magazines devote practically their entire space to propaganda of this sort. Such propaganda usually manages to present an air of some authority, for, since the advertisers are often also the writers in these publications, the unwitting readers cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that those who promise to make them healthy, wealthy, and happy (but eventually succeed in making them, or rather only some of them, wiser . . . ) are known to the editors and, being literary men and scholars, are therefore reliable. Photographs of the writers frequently grace the pages in both the reading and advertising sections. Gradually the poor neurotic or incapable clerk begins to think that the ingratiating smile of his patron saint spells luck for him.

### A GALLERY OF "APPLIED PSYCHOLOGISTS"

It would require more space than is available to draw up a list of the better known "greatest scientists" and "master minds" whose powers range from developing an imbecile into a genius to growing hair on a pate that for years has been as bald as a billiard ball. A few of the more alluring specimens may be mentioned.

Preëminent is the lady with the radiant glance, who, probably more than anyone else, has been instrumental

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in initiating the so-called "Applied Psychology Clubs." She lectures on such irresistible topics as "How to Live One Hundred Years," "How to Make a Million Dollars Honestly," and — of tragic significance to her listeners — "How to Grow Brains." Wreathed in smiles, she recites with charming informality the well-known hokum rhyme which begins:

*If you think you are beaten, you are;  
If you think you dare not, you don't;  
If you'd like to win, but think you can't —  
It's almost certain you won't.*

Then ignoring how human constitutions differ, she tells you to take half a teaspoonful of precipitated chalk every morning — it has helped her, therefore it should help you, as if there were not umteen different constitutional types of people.

Incidentally she asks how many had heard her on the radio that afternoon. Of course, very few did, but the public understands now that they are dealing with a celebrity — unmindful of the fact that radio stations are not very discriminating, especially when the radio buzz must be kept up continuously from morning till night. Nor do they understand that often, too, a publicity hound will pay for the privilege of being "listened in" to.

A worthy rival of this "psychologist" is the Florida "judge" who sells a "realization system of practical psychology" — "realization," I fancy, because it has *realized* a tidy little profit for him. Illustrations of a

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country home, a Rolls-Royce, a lovely bride, and other such desiderata grace his circulars. You can have these and many other luxuries after you have enrolled in the course — and paid thirty dollars for the privilege. But first you must fill out an elaborate application, resembling a legal document, which includes the question: "Are you prepared to promise that you will never knowingly use the truths now about to be given into your possession for the injury or oppression of any other person?" The follow-up letter written to the indifferent, vacillating, or procrastinating prospect is appealing, almost pathetic, and, in more ways than one, touching. Before I laid it aside, I found myself wondering whether, after all, I was not throwing away the greatest opportunity of my life.

No less intriguing are the pledges of the "Wonder Woman" from Los Angeles, founder of "auto-science." Enrolled in her course — twenty-five dollars for twelve lessons packed into six lectures — you will learn "how to radiate magnetism," and "how to broadcast your thoughts at will and produce action." You will be taught the "psychic handshake," "how to increase your business from one hundred to one thousand per cent in a few weeks," "how to collect debts without collection agencies or lawyers," "how to sell by means of thought transference," "how to broadcast for customers and get them," and "how to protect yourself against the mental influence of others." In addition, the lady is a mental healer. She gives absent treatment at "one mile or ten thousand miles distance, with or without



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consent of patient," and — for a consideration — she teaches you her magic power. Naturally, to such a gifted person, psychoanalysis, vocational guidance, and analysis of persons "on sight" are mere child's play.

One of the most extensive advertisers in magazines appealing to the uncritical is a man who styles himself "America's most famous practical psychologist" (evidently there are many in that guild who are "the most famous psychologist"). Having learnt the principle that frequency is the chief factor in memory and persuasive grip, he advertises half a dozen times in the same issue, sometimes even twice on a page, so that his poker face impresses itself on the mind of the reader. This method of advertising has now been adopted by others of the tribe.

It is with some reluctance that I include in this gallery the most influential and also probably the most affluent of the whole group. With all his attainments he deserves a niche quite to himself. This youthful-looking gentleman, who admits that "he has amassed a personal fortune in demonstration of his prosperity principles," greets you most suavely by means of an attractive folder emblazoned with his salesman's smile. Through his contacts in New York he has been able to build up what he calls a "sensational magazine success" which, thanks to his genius for publicity, claims a circulation of 175,000. In the brochure we read that "this great dynamic personality is the head of several great enterprises in New York City, and is the founder, publisher, and editor of ———, the sensational (*sic*)

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successful magazine that has grown 3000 per cent in five years." If you hear him for yourself, "you will go out to do big things. . . . You can get ahead, increase your income, have your own home and car, provide for your family, enjoy life, have perfect health and enduring happiness." We are advised that this "master teacher of the science of successful living" holds a B.A. degree from an Ohio college and was granted honorary degrees of Psy.D. and Ph.D. from institutions which he leaves nameless. To think that I had to spend four years toiling in Münsterberg's laboratory, measuring willed reactions on smoked paper, chewing quassia wood in memory experiments, while honorary degrees were being handed out for — for what? The answer to this question is not far to seek.

It is also stated that this man "has studied every basic course in Practical Psychology . . . and has read thousands of manuscripts." Mere psychologists, like myself, have had to wade through Helmholtz, Wundt, Münsterberg, Titchener, Bekhterev, and Hall, while this "supreme success" reads not published researches, but the manuscripts submitted by his writers. As for the type of manuscript our famous psychologist must read, the titles tell the whole story: "Married Men as Seen by Seven Beautiful Manicurists," "Psychological Sam," "Psychological Facts about Love," "Can Women Love?" "Valentino's Charm," "You Can Live to Be 150," "Lenore Ulric on Freedom," "Are You a Boob on The Stock Market?" "Don't Let Your Mental Assets Freeze," etc.

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Because of its large circulation, the magazine in question is perhaps the most insidious purveyor of pernicious quackery in the land. Occasionally it publishes excerpts from the works of well-known psychologists, as if these men were paid contributors. The catholic tastes of its Book Department is evidenced by the volumes recommended to the reader — lists which include William James (I have even discovered one of my own works suggested) together with Orison Swett Marden, Basil King, and other “pep” writers. Like the tipster sheet, which lists a few gilt-edge securities but dwells principally on worthless stocks, this pseudological magazine offers titbits from genuine psychologists, but features as psychological material of equal value the effusions of inspirational writers who keep repeating themselves *ad nauseam* on almost every other page.

Another person deserving honorable mention in this irrepressible legion is the jovial-looking personality transformer who has assumed the name of one of the noblest families in England. The fact that this man died fifteen years ago at the age of seventy-four does not deter his publisher from continuing to print attractive full page advertisements which contain his (?) youthful photograph and give the impression that he is still alive. But alive or dead, he “makes your brain a super-sending and receiving radio instrument.” You need only buy his book for five dollars (other books of his, the publishers claim, have sold at \$50 and \$100) and “you can make yourself what you will: great, grand, splendid, supreme in mind and thought, honored wher-

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ever you are known." Certainly five dollars is not too much to pay for such results. A companion volume, "now the standard work of the Magnetism Club of America", guarantees a complete change of personality in five days — a boast which may be responsible for the sale of 700,000 copies of the book. The imprint of a fictitious university press is of course calculated to inspire the reading public with confidence; and for this reason the law stepped in to cause the removal of the reference to this non-existent university. One of the stunts is to introduce some statement in the folders or circulars, ascribed to a scientist, as if the words had any relation to the book in question.

I could go on citing illustration after illustration of "master minds," "greatest teachers," "foremost psychologists," psychomentors, psychometrists, character analysts, bio-psychologists, metapsychologists, phrenologists, physiognomists, characterologists, numerologists, psychics, and clairvoyants — but a complete directory of charlatans, quacks, and semi-quacks would be both pointless and depressing. However, one "psychological" contraption, termed a "Konzentrator," must be mentioned, if only for its ingenuity. So far as I could determine from the illustration, this device consists of a piece of metal which may be attached to the forehead. With my own modest knowledge of physiological psychology I was somewhat startled to read that this strip of brass, "revitalizes the neurones, the bi-polar brain nerve cells; develops a more receptive, more retentive

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memory no course of training can procure, and helps to concentrate thought. That is all." Considering that the price is only ten dollars, it is not only all — it is enough, and more than enough. Limited minds may be a bit puzzled as to how this "psychotechnical accessory, more important to Mind than spectacles are to sight," can affect even the scalp, let alone the neurones in the brain. Possibly the permanent departure of ten dollars is sufficient cause for concentration.

Another "latest triumph of science" is the Psycho-phone; and here is what it does for you according to its own claims:

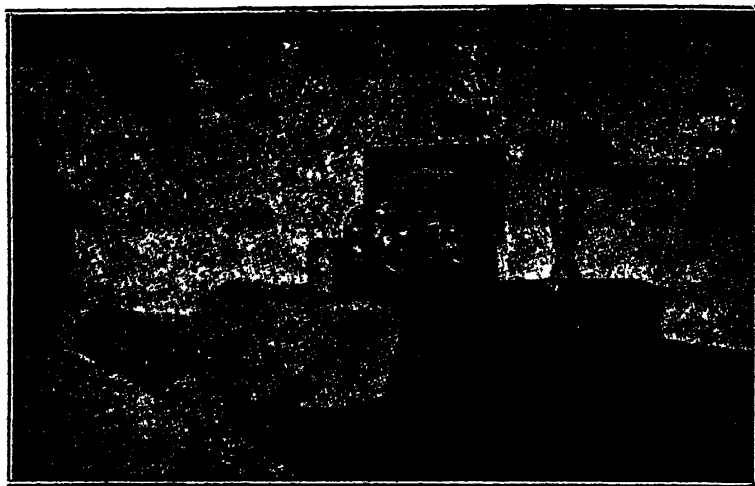
### Excerpts from Psychophone Blurb

"From all over the country amazing reports are being received about a startling new invention which helps people achieve their desires, aims, ambitions—*while asleep*. This invention, the PSYCHOPHONE, is founded on a scientific principle and seems almost supernatural in its workings. The most remarkable testimonies, telling of almost unbelievable results, keep pouring in. As one man writes: 'I can't make it out. There seems to be something uncanny about the whole thing, but I know it has done for me *over night what the doctors have failed to do in 5 weeks.*'"

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"You go to bed, diffident, shy, unsuccessful, in poor health. You sleep, quietly, peacefully. While you sleep, you gain strength, vigor, vitality, masterfulness. In a short time, you become a *new* man. Sounds miraculous, doesn't it?

"Yet this is happening *right now* all over the country. Men and women are realizing their fondest hopes, most cherished ambitions, in this almost supernatural manner."



### PSYCHOPHONE

If this device actually worked at all, it would certainly go a long way to proving that many people could accomplish more in their sleep than they do while awake.

A much more involved problem for the scientist was the scheme concocted some years ago by a few officers in an Applied Psychology Club numbering over a thousand members. Eventually the district attorney

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became curious to learn in what way turning somersaults in a hammock (which the members were urged to buy at twenty dollars each from one of the club leaders) could lengthen the spinal column or so affect the vertebrae as to add to the span of life.

By this time the reflective reader will probably ask why the quack is so successful, why his bait is so effective, and whether there is a special type of mind which allows itself to be imposed upon. To answer these questions satisfactorily would necessitate an excursion into sociology and economics, as well as into psychology. With due respect to Mr. Barnum, the birth rate is only one factor in the explanation. Judging from the harvests reaped in Southern California, Florida, and other such paradises of the charlatan, one might even discover, paradoxical as it may sound, an inverse ratio between Barnum's birth rate and the general birth rate. In other words, there is likely to be a greater spread of quackery in those localities where birth control is practiced than where totalitarian birth rates still prevail. The reason is fairly evident. Where population is restricted, prosperity is rampant. Leisurely matrons and retired yokels are bent on acquiring culture. Lacking the critical faculty, they fall a prey to the army of intellectual Ponzis.

### REASONS FOR THE QUACK'S SUCCESS

There are other causes, however, of which ignorance — mixed with self-centredness — is one. To

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understand this state of mind, I have but to recollect my own mental outlook at the age of eleven, when I actually believed that somewhere in the world there were mysteries, secrets, and formulae possessed by a few lucky individuals, some of whom would be beneficent enough to give them away for the asking. Hypnotism, animal magnetism, and vitapathy were then the stock-in-trade. Booklet after booklet, letter after letter came to this eleven-year-old youngster, who soon resigned himself to the thought that he would have to forego becoming a powerful hypnotist. Not even the systematic and progressive reductions from twenty-five dollars to \$14.68 and then to \$7.98 and further to \$4.87 were sufficiently drastic to enlist my support, for even \$4.87 was a fabulous sum to me. At any rate, it was not long before I understood that not all which is advertised is truth. In my later teens it even became a source of pleasure to scan the advertising pages of certain publications in order to discriminate between the genuine and the fraudulent claims.

Unfortunately, many thousands of people have not outgrown this pre-adolescent stage. They still believe that they can get something for nothing, that for a trifling fee they may secure precious secrets, Aladdin's lamp, "open sesame" incantations, wishbones, lucky names, rejuvenation extracts, concentration plates — in other words, all that one can wish for. These "*Homo Saps*" are told: "Tune in your conscious Intellectual Energy with the subconscious urge, or Solar Energy, and win! Be sure you are in vibration, and then go



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ahead. A 'Good Name' in vibration with the public's subconscious mind is worth \$80,000,000." They ponder over this advice and feel somewhat as Archimedes did when he cried "Eureka!"

I have no doubt that the Leaky Name Analyst in Los Angeles, whose advertisement in a number of magazines advises that if you are unsuccessful in life, it is because you have a leaky name, and for only two dollars which you are to send her, this numerologist and name plumber will fix up your name for you, has made a leak in many a poor pocket when the two dollars changed ownership as a result of her brazen quackery.

Perhaps Barnum was right, after all, in his famous dictum about the public. If there is a *Will-to-live*, as Schopenhauer maintained, a *Will-to-power*, as Nietzsche taught, a *Will-to-believe*, as James would have us believe — why may there not be a *Will-to-be-fooled*? Even assuming that there is in most of us this hankering for self-delusion, it is nourished by other tendencies and penchants. The average person is impatient of results and will not apply himself. The quack, who promises everything in short order, comes to him as a benevolent Messiah. He tells his audience or his correspondents that any one of them can achieve wonders, become a genius, roll in prosperity, and cure all ailments. It is a harangue that appeals to the underdog, to the incompetent and inefficient, to the weak-willed and inferior-feeling. What a boon it seems to them! On getting up every morning all they have to do is to throw out their chests and repeat to themselves a dozen

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times, "I am full of pep," stressing different words in this affirmation at different times; or every hour they must tell themselves, "I am, I can, I will," and they are destined, in violation of all the laws of heredity and the distribution curve of intelligence, to be transformed into leaders of thought or captains of industry. Illustrations are always cited of men who "made good," and authorities are quoted — with willful perversions of meaning — in order to clinch the argument. In short, the quack appeals to democracy — to the belief that "one man is as good as another, and often a darned sight better."

### PEPTOMANIACS

One might think that sooner or later this believing world would come to its senses and realize that it is being made the butt of a huge hoax. Some, it is true, do awaken from their roseate dream — wiser if sadder. The majority, however, do not learn their lesson because they do not want to learn. It is my conviction that there are far more people in the world who require mental drugs than there are dope fiends. These victims of mental quackery are constitutional "pep fiends" — neurotics who will pass by a lifebuoy to clutch at a straw. At every opportunity they come to listen (listening is easier than reading) to their mentors, anticipating their comforting anecdotes, inspirational slogans, iconoclastic denunciations of established scientific verities — all of which they have heard many

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times before. Their vanity is not only flattered; it is titillated. Now they can measure up to any intellectual giant. To be sure, after a few days or weeks, depression sets in; but if they live in a fairly large center, some other medicine man is bound to make his appearance, and the merry — yet tragic — process begins again.

Ask them to read a few pages of elementary psychology, even the inspirational messages in the inimitable style of William James, and they will complain that the "stuff is too deep" for them. "I am, I can, I will" they understand, just as a child understands the nursery rhymes. Every word-salad is to them clear, for they grasp it not intellectually but emotionally.

The large majority of these mental drug addicts are sheer neurotics, who will reject the substance and chase the shadow. It is the very personality-twist responsible for their condition which is at the root of their perversity of mental attitude toward the true and the false. This subject, however, interesting and important as it is, must not be dwelt on at length.

Another factor which contributes to the success of the psychological quack is the cult value of the "lessons." At an ordinary lecture or address the audience is passive; at these "psychology" meetings the auditors perform. They actually participate in the ritual and jollity, and sometimes the atmosphere savors of a revival meeting.

I was once asked to address a large Applied Psychology Club and the impression of that experience is

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still vivid in my mind. I found myself moving on a sort of super-plane. The chairman, who looked like a senator, referred to the crowded hall as a "lyceum," and the two students who accompanied me were spoken of as my "disciples." An exalted term was applied to my lecture, and I began to wonder what I, the lecturer, might be in that universe of discourse. The chairman's leading question, "How do you feel to-night?" was answered by a lusty "We're all right — why shouldn't we be?" The audience was then enjoined to take several deep breaths in unison, and this ceremony was followed by others, the details of which I no longer recall. At most of such psychology meetings there is a sing-song. Although content to give the floor to the speaker, the members of the audience feel that, after all, it is *their* party. The mind may not be "attuned" to the reception of genuine ideas, but at least there is a general wave of good feeling and enthusiasm which will wash down any statement uttered from the platform.

### CURBING THE EVIL

So much for the methods of the psychological quack and the causes of his success. But description and analysis must be followed by therapeutics. There are at least fifteen thousand mental quacks in the United States (my estimate is based on the advertisements in certain weeklies and monthlies) who prey on from ten to fifteen million gullible egotists. Tampa, Washington, Los Angeles, and New York, the latter not in pro-

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portion to the others, form the chief operating fields. To judge from the increase in advertisements of the questionable sort, the trade is prospering; and, what is worse, the barrier between the *academic* and the *epidemic* — if I may accentuate the distinction — is growing less noticeable, because of the tempting engagements and fees offered to *bona fide* psychologists.

If there is to be any campaign against this hundred-headed hydra, it ought to be thorough and well-directed. In the first place, the Association for the Advancement of Science should conduct an enlightenment service, answering queries and broadcasting information in a manner similar to that of the Better Business Bureau. This drive against quackery should enlist the aid of legislation in so far as it is feasible. Magazines should refuse to print advertisements which promise palpably impossible results. Librarians and cataloguers should distinguish between the gold and the dross. As I wrote in the preface to my *Bibliography of Character and Personality*: "It is to be hoped that librarians and bibliographers will some day exercise more discrimination in their classifications, and will place these books under a rubric called 'unscientific.'"

"In most of the libraries, you will find books on palmistry, numerology and astrology classed with psychology; at times even on the same shelf. This is in a sense attaching a stamp of approval to a type of literature which has no scientific status. Why psychology should be expected to serve as the good Samaritan for all trash is not clear. If hospitality is to be shown to

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these outcasts, then astronomy might include astrology, and numerology should be housed with mathematics. Librarians seem to be guided by what the public wants, and the public is influenced by the wholesale advertisements it reads." Hence the librarian often plays right into the hands of the pseudosophists.

Under no consideration should a man of science speak before any of the so-called Applied Psychology Clubs. I am glad to say that ever since my initiation into the purpose of these clubs, eighteen years ago, I have constantly declined all such invitations. Nor should a psychologist, biologist, or sociologist of standing fraternize with any of the "pep vendors," much less write articles for their publications. In all likelihood, such *rapprochements* between scientist and quack would be frowned upon by the American Psychological Association, but as yet not all of the younger and more ambitious psychologists realize the import of these injunctions. Need they be reminded that "an error is the more dangerous in proportion to the degree of truth it contains?"

Being scientists, psychologists owe a duty to the community. Instead of assuming an otiose aloofness, ignoring the quack, they might well adopt Voltaire's battle cry and apply it in a more serviceable cause — *Écrasez l'infâme !*

## Chapter IX

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS





## IX

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

*'T is not in mortals to command success;  
But we'll do more, Sempronius — we'll deserve it.*

— ADDISON

A magic word which casts its spell over millions of dumb worshippers, awe-stricken before its shrine. The Greeks have their Zeus and Venus, their Pluto and Mercury, Minerva and Bacchus, but success is a modern god, perhaps not more omnipotent but certainly more universal than Mammon, and consecrated particularly in the Western world.

Is success a mere word, a term, a figure of speech, a Platonic Idea hovering in the realm of timeless existence, a concept to be analyzed on the basis of experience or an actual fact recurring in our very midst and affecting our personal well-being, our very life?

The answer is: It is all of that, but what we are concerned about here is the concept of success as exemplified by the facts.

We employ the word *success* frequently enough without bothering to examine its meaning. How many times a year do we wish our friends success, and how often do we dream of success ourselves? We speak of a successful dress, a successful party, a successful match, a successful song, a successful writer, as well as of a successful man. Popular usage is, of course, loose. If

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the man in the street were asked to define the term "success" or "successful", he would experience even greater difficulty in fixing its connotation than in defining that famous word "spiral", for in the former task, the hands would be of no avail.

Is success matter for psychologists to consider? Well, perhaps the majority of them deem it unworthy of their efforts to analyze such a popular notion. Certainly, social psychology is bound to reckon with every group attitude. But even individual psychology (not in Adler's sense) must devote some attention to the *mental set and physiological accompaniments of the act* or series of acts going to make up the state of success. What sensations, emotions, feelings, secretions, muscular contractions occur in the pursuit and on the attainment of success?

### OF MICE AND MEN

In Warren's *Dictionary of Psychology*, the term "success" is missing, although the "successful act" is, from a purely experimental point of view, defined rather "successfully" as "a response or a series of responses in trial and error learning which lead directly or advantageously toward the goal or objective."

It is a definition framed by animal psychologists, who were the first, if not the only ones, to deal with the term "success" in psychology. If the mouse finds its way through the maze and is rewarded for this achievement by the experimenter, it is successful. We

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may take it that a man or a woman who learns, through trial and error, to reach its goal is also successful.

To be sure, we must recognize that such a criterion of success is not very adequate. How much trial is allowed and how many errors are permitted; and who sets the goal? The lucky mouse is fortunate in that it does not have to determine its own objective. An indulgent laboratory experimenter takes care that the task is not a too heavy burden for the species. Occasionally, by the way, we do discover a genius among mice too, *e. g.*, the mickey mouse, which, if it could collect royalties, would undoubtedly mix with the "400", in person, but then such genius is contingent on the moronity of humanity. The success of man may require other conditions than the carrying out of someone else's project.

### THE LITTLE MAN'S VIEW

The average man associates success with the amassing of a fortune. Europeans believe that this view is specifically American, but Americanism is becoming, at least among the masses, more and more a European ideal. The average woman thinks of success in terms of a happy marriage, to a good provider, so that her friends might envy her. All other phases of success seem to be merged in the facet of gold. A successful lawyer is one who commands fees in the seven figures. A successful surgeon is one who will be busy, no matter how high the fees for his services. A successful writer

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is not necessarily one whose merit will be attested by posterity but rather a scribe in popular demand — “the highest paid writer”, as the national magazines advertise him or her.

The assumption underlying this criterion of success is that to be successful is “getting what you want”, and that money is what everyone wants most. With these two premises, the conclusion is about inescapable. The successful man in this light appears to be one who can supply a demand, one who can adjust himself to the needs of the public. The late Edgar Wallace was eminently successful, as is H. G. Wells. The comic strip creators, the movie actors with and without “It,” are all illustrious examples of this slant on success, and a “hundred and thirty million Americans can’t be wrong.”

### HISTORICAL FIGURES AND MONETARY FIGURES

Our perplexity begins to manifest itself when we delve into biography and compare historical figures with numerical figures. Spinoza was not a successful man considered from the above angle. He might have been successful, if instead of writing his great works, which in the main, were not to see the light of day until after his death, he sat down to compile a series of stories about philosophers. In that case, however, he would not have figured in the history of philosophy; and while he might have been a successful writer, he would not have been known as a philosopher (the

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phrase "successful philosopher" sounds somewhat comical, and in its ludicrousness argues eloquently against the popular view of success).

Schubert, the great composer, was decidedly unsuccessful. He could hardly manage to keep body and soul together in spite of his phenomenal productivity. I shall leave it to the reader to decide whether Schubert was a musical success or not. Similarly whatever might be said about Edgar Allan Poe's attainments, success, as popularly defined, was not one of them. Nevertheless, if success means anything in the field of creative imagination, Poe has had a great share of it.

✓ The instances may be multiplied, but sufficient evidence has been adduced to show that not the majority ruling determines the criterion or measure of success in anything but financial and industrial prowess. Sometimes even psychologists are taken in by this superficial earmark, as when a former president of the American Psychological Association declared that not intelligence but a series of fortunate circumstances were responsible for most of the success now-a-days, and incidentally stirred up a hornet's nest among the editorial writers and columnists.

That there is an element of truth in the circumstantial origin of the businessman's success may be gathered from present conditions as compared with the halcyon period of prosperity, when fortunes could be made by every Tom, Dick, and Harry, but where are all the successful market operators, realtors, captains of industry, Ruperts of finance, today? If there

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are still a good many "earning" two hundred thousand dollars a year, aside from bonuses, we have discovered since through what manipulations these salaries and little gratuities have been acquired. These gentlemen have "lucky breaks" — no they have taken lucky breaks, often breaking the treasury of the stock holders, investors, depositors, constituents, etc. It requires admittedly certain brains to accomplish this end, but in nearly every case the brains may be bought by a handsome fee. As if to confirm the truth contained in such books as *The Robber Barons* and *America's Sixty Families*, Richard Whitney, former President of the New York Stock Exchange, has made himself the symbol of this type of success.

### SUCCESS IN THE CREATIVE SPHERE

It is different with the success of the scientist, the artist or the real statesman. While a modicum of luck or good fortune, which means simply a series of chance happenings favorable to the individual in question and grasped by him, does take place, it is, first of all, his *ability* which counts in the long run. He may not be able to land a good position, even with his ability, if he lacks certain social requirements, but he can with effort reach a high goal in his chosen vocation. Bach was only a poorly paid choir master in the small St. Thomas Church of Leipzig, but his works proclaim his everlasting success. Van Gogh could not be a popular commercial artist and live on Park Avenue, but his suc-

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cess as an artist cannot be questioned. The Dutch janitor, Leeuwenhoek, was hardly a success, as the current notion goes, but as a scientist, he was most successful.

If ability counts for a great deal in the eventual attainment of success, then no less is *effort* an important ingredient of success. Not even a genius can reach a conspicuous position without setting his will upon accomplishing a specific task. Energy, perseverance, endurance are as vital to success as capability or talent; and the exercise of these qualities involves inhibitions or resistances, the direction or deflection of energy into the proper channels. In other words, the successful man is one who may have benefited to some extent by certain good *breaks* and who has demonstrated that he has *brains*, but for all his *breaks* and *brains*, he could have been only a near success, without his applying the *brakes* to his undesirable impulses.

Courage in the face of defeat is also one of those volitional qualities, akin to perseverance, requisite to success. A large proportion of unsuccessful people may have finally mounted the pinnacle instead of bidding at pinochle, did not their spirits sink with the first failure. Idealists in temperament are more addicted to this fault than realists, who are intent upon the goal and do not imagine that the second attempt will turn out as badly as the first. It takes stamina to combat this general trait of losing heart. All good organizers, from Hannibal down to General Goethals or Lord Strathcona have known and cherished this secret of success. The story of the great Scotch hero, Bruce, observing the

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spider's success after seven failures, and the moral which he himself drew for his own battle with England are well known, but it is one thing to be acquainted with the possibility and quite another to make out of the possibility an actuality.

### SUCCESS OFTEN A SUCCESSION OF FAILURES

From the field of experimentation, much can be learned as to the nature of success. When we read that some great discovery has been made, we little realize what fruitless efforts preceded the actual find. Not all scientists are as fortunate as Newton was said to have been in obtaining his gravitation cue from the falling apple or as Archimedes, in his bath tub, discovering the law of specific gravity. Ehrlich was a remarkable laboratory investigator, yet it took 606 trials, before he concocted his Salvarsan. He might have died without bringing his experiments to fruition. There are people who spend decades in the laboratory before eliciting a single secret from Mother Nature. Aside from those who tried to find a formula for squaring the circle or to devise a *perpetuum mobile*, or to discover the philosopher's stone for turning the baser metals into gold, even the unsuccessful experimenters have not been total failures; for they have invariably contributed to the general branch of science known as methodology. Often, too, the results, though negative, have led to a positive conclusion.

The etymological connotation of the term "suc-



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cess", viz, "leading up to" or "a following up", implies that this consciously directed drive, perhaps slow, but sure and steady, has been regarded as the pivotal point of our notion. Success is not a momentary, fleeting, or capricious phenomenon, but the sum-total of many activities. It is not, like love, as Carmen tells us, "the rebellious bird which none can tame and which heeds no call if it thus suits her."

### HITLER WEARS CROWN OF SUCCESS

At the present time it would seem that the most successful individual in the world is the house-painter-corporal who has been able to realize his fondest dream of annexing Austria, ruling Czechoslovakia and regaining the millions of Germans whose ancestors escaped Germany at a time when it was comparatively free, and practically bringing to his feet the British lion, now alas, no longer rampant, let alone *La Belle France*. Even the little Corporal who was at least a military genius and a titan as compared with Hitler, could do no better; and, what is more, he had to fight for his victories.

If we analyze Hitler's success, we shall discover that what my teacher, Rudolf Eucken, said of Bismarck is applicable with greater force to his imitation — "He has made Germany bigger and the Germans smaller". Hitler's success reminds one of the frenzied finance bubbles which are bound to burst because underneath are manipulations of the most artificial sort. Ponzi the Boston wizard is now practically reduced to beggary in

Italy. Kreuger and Musica-Coster were suicides. Nazi Germany is in a state of moral, intellectual, and economic bankruptcy, and once the democratic world makes a decided stand, on the verge of collapse, yet people will speak of Hitler's success, only because he temporarily took in old Chamberlain and was able to expand. The frog in the fable did it too until it burst.

Naturally other questions arise from a survey of even contemporary history. Can we call the various dictators ruling their country with an iron hand successful? Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler are surely successful men in that they have climbed to the topmost rung of the political ladder; but our dialectic method only begins here. Is Trotsky, for whom I hold no brief as an ethical or humane individual, any less successful, simply because he was bulldosed and hounded, than Stalin who remains the ruler of the Soviet Union?

A pragmatist would probably say "yes", that "the proof of the pudding is" etc., but Stalin's success would be better established if the pudding in the Soviet Union could be eaten literally, or for that matter, if nourishing bread and staple victuals could be had by the Russian people with less pains, and fewer founders of the Communist State were liquidated.

Would Napoleon have been a greater success as a military leader if instead of dying at St. Helena, he died at Fontainebleau? And to revert to Adolf Hitler, can it be said that his career is a success when he is making out of a great nation an even greater ruination, even if he has succeeded in browbeating a timid world?

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If getting what you want is the essence of success, then the obscure wretch who burned the temple of Jupiter was by that token egregiously successful; gangsters who evade the law are successes, and even if they should "be taken for a ride" and "bumped off" or "rubbed out" they could still have the tribute applied to them; for who does not die? And if success can be enjoyed during life only, then death itself does not annul the achievement and enjoyment of the gangster while he was alive.

### THE SOCIAL CRITERION

The queries posed seem to point to a new criterion of success, and that is the *welfare of society* as a whole. Anything which hinders progress or is anti-social cannot be judged in terms of success. A successful burglar is merely one who is not caught but is not to be classed with successful people whose aim is not predatory. The same ruling holds of the successful banker who has increased his wealth by cheating the investors and depositors. Would Richard Whitney have been a success if he had wriggled out of a jail sentence, thanks to a corrupt administration? Success, in other words, is not wholly an individual attainment. The purpose is not without its significance in the appraisal of success.

To sum up: the ingredients of success are native ability, perseverance, a way with people, and least of all a favorable conjuncture. The criteria of success are in terms of permanence and social progress.

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Success is of course, a comparative affair. How successful one must be in order to be regarded as such will depend on the nature of the field of activity, the amount of competition and the place and time. Generally speaking, the successful can be recruited only from those classes of vocations which require a high degree of expertness and training. One can hardly speak of a successful bank teller, barber or stenographer, because there are so many of the same vocation, and also because the successful barber would become a master barber, *i. e.*, a businessman, and the successful stenographer would turn secretary. To do something efficiently is not sufficient to merit the certificate of success. The "something" must be a task at which only few can excel, and important as well. Otherwise we should be talking of a successful hod carrier, a successful bootblack or a successful soda fountain clerk. There is, to be sure, nothing to prevent us from designating these workers as successful, any more than a woman can be restrained from referring to her mate as a successful husband. Success by implication, if not by definition, belongs to a minority of individuals. To widen its extension would be frustrating its significance.

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## Chapter X

# COMMON SENSE ABOUT MARRIAGE

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## MARRIAGE LORE

On many occasions I have been asked whether it is possible to determine beforehand who would make a good husband or a good wife. What a boon it would be to mankind if there were some definite cues which one could take before plunging into matrimony. To be sure, there is the question whether with all the sciences and arts at our disposal, we would not be willing to gamble once Cupid shot his arrow. Most young people, in choosing between love and science, certainly would not choose science; or in practically every instance, it would be said that theirs is a special case, different from every other romance.

Assuming, however, that science could be of aid, can we offer any suggestions as to what earmarks to look for, or rather what to avoid in selecting a partner for life?

There are very few problems as complicated as this. Nature has seen to it that there should be no simple guide; otherwise the world would become depopulated. The most experienced and wisest of men and women have been groping about like babes in the woods when confronted with the situation of marriage; and the increasing number of divorces reveals more and more plainly that human mating, conservatively speaking, is one of the most vexing matters before us.

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### A FUTILE QUESTION

Are there good husbands *as such* and good wives *as such*? Or can a good man be a failure as a husband, and a good woman an "unsuccessful wife"? Both of these questions may be answered in the affirmative. From history and biography we know that some men have been practically saints and martyrs in their domestic forbearance and endurance, and similarly some women have behaved like angels. Abraham Lincoln was not only a martyred President, but also a martyred husband. He would have been a good husband with every wife, for he had passed the acid test with a psychopathic shrew who would have taxed the patience of 99.9% of men. He always remembered that it takes two to make a quarrel.

On the other hand, some husbands could be model husbands in terms of reciprocity, or on the condition that their wives are not disagreeable. That is naturally true of women too. With another mate they would have lived "happily ever after". Contrary to the fable that we have often heard to the effect that a second marriage never turns out well, there are numerous second and even third marriages on record which are satisfactory. Failures are mainly the result of wide differences in age, jealousy, misrepresentation, or disillusionment. This would go to show that every partner in an unhappy marriage must be a poor spouse. Otherwise, it might be maintained, adaptation would come to the rescue.



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### VARIABLE OF SELF-ADJUSTMENT

Still, since there are a great many both men and women who have the knack of getting along, we might consider whether there may not be some constitutional qualities which tend to make out of us good husbands or good wives. It must be understood that a good man does not necessarily make a good husband, and vice versa. Carlyle was undoubtedly a high-principled intellect, but Jane Carlyle, his wife, had much to complain of, although she did not indulge in self-pity. On the other hand, bandits, crooks, and besters were often devoted to their wives. One of the best recent illustrations of true devotion on the part of a swindler is Coster-Musica. The love element explains the fact in most cases, and the "ego" factor (that is to say, the wife is identified with themselves, just as their children, and therefore "nothing is too good" for their wives) takes care of the other cases. An unscrupulous man like Prince Bismarck, who plunged his country and France into war, and to some extent was instrumental in causing the World War, could be the most loving of husbands.

When love exists, nearly all annoyances remain below the threshold; where love never existed or else ceased to be, misunderstandings are apt to be magnified, and two wills are bound to work at cross purposes. An elderly man was berated as a shark, a deadbeat, and what-not, among a group of his employees, "Oh", said one of them with a more charitable mind, "But you

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ought to see how devoted he is to his wife". "Well", they agreed, "there is at least something to that beast." "But, how old is his wife?" ventured another, with an inquiring mind. "Well", came the answer, "she is 22 and very pretty." That, of course, explains it all. We doubt whether the same man would have been a good husband, if he had a wife not only older than himself, but homely and shrewish.

### METHODS OF APPROACH

We often encounter lists of qualities drawn up, according to Benjamin Franklin's recommendation, by men and women, either about to embark on matrimony or after they have given evidence of good team work for a number of years. The lists are about as reliable as the answers to the question, "What do you owe your long life to?" directed to a modern Methuselah. One centenarian will say it is due to his never having taken a drop of whiskey, and another will attribute it to his regular drinking habits. A third will point to his strict regimen in diet, sleep, or sex life; and a fourth living in the same home for the aged will tell you with a twinkle in his eye what a scapegrace he had been, and that he had divorced a few wives and buried a couple of others.

Sometimes we hear that couples ought to have the same interests, *e. g.*, a writer should marry a writer, and an actress should wed an actor — then their union will be lasting. The mere thought of Hollywood is enough to puncture this theory.

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So we become prepared to hearken to the other side, which insists that couples should have divergent interests, but again, we can pile up case upon case of happy marriages even though the life partners are engaged in the same pursuit. Sinclair Lewis, *e. g.*, gets along with Dorothy Thompson, even though his first wife thought him to be possessed of an ungovernable temper.

It is frequently said that husband and wife should be on the same level of intelligence, at least on the same social plane. Shall we page, then, the greatest cultured genius Germany produced — Goethe, with his peasant wife, to whom his works were sealed books? Or, perhaps, let us call up the name of another cultural giant, the poet Heine, with his grisette wife.

A suggestion has been made by the late Richard Cabot to ascertain whether prospective husband and wife possess a like sense of humor, whether they laugh at the same type of jokes. Of course, we rather sense that couples in love *will* laugh at the same thing. There is an intense process of adaptation going on at that time, which, alas, does not last when love has flown out of the window.

A more far-reaching key is the concern with the values in life, as interpreted by Spranger in Germany, who believes that to size up an individual, you must have an idea about his conception of value. When you tell a girl that you would like to introduce her to a young man and she says: "Does he drive a Rolls Royce"? while the young man happens to be interested in foreign missions, you may take it for granted that

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the introduction is unnecessary. If one is preoccupied with the eternal values, and the other is engrossed in dollar value, there is bound to be unhappiness, even if the divorce court, for one reason or another, is avoided. Similarly, a man with a passion for power cannot live in harmony with a woman endowed with a love for her fellow-beings, unless one or the other makes substantial compromises, which naturally goes against the grain.

### CONTROLLED STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE

Psychologists of late have turned their attention to the problems of mating. Their approach is not speculative, *i. e.*, figuring out what *should* be a fact. Instead, they have a more or less *experimental* approach. They arrange their groups into happily and unhappily married couples and then put hundreds of questions to them so as to determine the traits of each group.

In two articles which appeared some time prior to the work on *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness*, Terman and Bottenwieser reported an investigation<sup>1</sup> which purported to answer a number of pertinent questions bearing on marital compatibility.

Apparently they had intended testing many combinations, such as aesthetic preferences, religious beliefs, etc., in a group of 100 happily married couples, 100 unhappily married couples, and a divorced group, mak-

1) L. M. Terman and P. Bottenwieser: "Personality Factors in Marital Compatibility", *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1935, vol. VI.

## Marriage Lore

ing a total of 600 individuals, but decided to confine themselves to measuring mental masculinity and femininity differences and "interest-maturity" and, *faute de mieux*, a few other traits, since they did not believe that the various personality tests measured what they set out to measure.

While the results are by no means conclusive in a positive direction, there are a few observations made which strike one as interesting, if not significant. We are told, for instance that "very few of L [the least happy] group, husbands or wives, rated the marriage as less happy than average. It is not known whether this is due to avoidance of complete frankness in answering so personal a question, to a general pessimism about marriage engendered by their own unhappiness, or to a Freudian 'projection' tendency."

The study has also brought out the fact, in apparent refutation of the Oedipus-Electra complex doctrine, that happily married couples "report more attachment for and less conflict with both their parents than are reported by the unhappily married." They found, too, that happy marriages tend to run in families.

In a sequel to this study, Terman and Buttenwieser asked themselves the question: "Is the mere fact of resemblance or difference between the spouses measured favorable or unfavorable to marital compatibility?" Comparisons of "interest-maturity", introversion, dominance, self-sufficiency, neurotic tendency, and masculinity-femininity showed low or negligible correlation with marital happiness, while no correlation was found

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between marital happiness and age at marriage, age differences between husband and wife, or number of children.

A subsequent inquiry on marital personality<sup>2</sup> was published about the same time by W. B. Johnson and L. M. Terman, assisted by P. Bottenwieser, which offered slightly more positive data.

Three hundred couples (that is to say 600 individuals) were selected from three groups, (1) happily married, (2) unhappily married, and (3) divorced. A list of 545 standardized questions was given to each of the 600 individuals to answer, and on the basis of these results, the following conclusions have been gained.

### TRAITS OF HAPPILY AND UNHAPPILY MARRIED

"Happily married men are outstandingly coöperative, compliant to group ends, emotionally stable, conservative, and cautious, though not lacking in initiative. Compared with either of the other groups they object less to being told what to do, are less rebellious, react better to discipline, prefer to do their planning with others, and (more than divorced men) avoid fighting to get their own way. . . . In keeping with this, they are more amiable and placid than the other male groups: they are less touchy, less grouchy, less irritable in handling complaints, less critical of others, and fonder of

2) W. B. Johnson and L. M. Terman: "Personality Characteristics of Happily Married, Unhappily Married and Divorced Persons", *Character and Personality*, 1935, vol. III.

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household pets. They are less desirous of avoiding arguments than divorced men, perhaps because they are able to argue without becoming emotional."

"The unhappily married man differs from the happily married in being less amiable, tolerant, and sympathetic, less interested in social welfare activities, and more irritable, moody, and seclusive. He differs from the typical divorced man in showing less initiative, self-confidence and personal ambition, and in his greater tendency of conservatism."

"The divorced men differ from the happily married men in conative tendencies, in various social attitudes, in literary and artistic interests and in certain of the introvertive tendencies. In the volitional field they are characterized by what may be called conative intensity. As compared with happily married men they are more self-confident, more willing to take risks, less meticulous or methodical and less cautious in their attitudes toward money.

"Their greater tendency to mental self-sufficiency is indicated by the following facts: More often than either the happily married men or the unhappily married men they prefer to be alone in times of emotional stress, face their troubles alone; prefer making hurried decisions alone, and are willing to take chances alone.

"In general, the divorced men tend to be self-willed, self-centred, zestful, incautious, and daring. More than the happily married men they are made discontented by discipline, rebel at orders, and dislike being told to do things. More often than the unhappily mar-

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ried men they fight for their own way and ignore the feelings of others in attaining an end, and are more prone than either of the other groups to complain to the waiter when served unsatisfactory food. They frequently make wagers, having a liking for poker and for the occupation of stock broker, make loans, avoid playing safe, place a lower value on permanence of work, and more often prefer commission to a definite salary. In line with the above, they are less meticulous and methodical than either of the other groups; they care less for regular hours, have less liking for methodical work, plan their work less in detail, and have less liking for the magazine 'System' or for the occupation of retailer.

"As compared with the other groups they appear to have somewhat more artistic and literary interest and less interest in things mechanical. This is seen in their expressed liking for literature, modern languages, symphony concerts, and the occupation of novelist, and by their expressed dislike for operating a machine, repairing a clock, or making a radio."

"Happily married women are, as may be imagined, characterized by the feminine virtue familiar in the old fashioned protected matron. The group presents the kindly, confiding, warm human aspects of personality as its most outstanding characteristic. Although they are less characterized by hardy strength than the divorced, they reveal fewer of the definitely weak personalities so common among the unhappily married.



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They tend to be coöperative, unselfish, and well adjusted."

As to the unhappily married women, we note from the questionnaire results that they are more critical of others, would not check themselves in correcting others, even when giving offence. They lack tact, they are neither sympathetic nor amiable and will not be helpful to friends, nor will their advice be sought, although they are socially inclined. They are intolerant, self-centred, and irritable, neurotic, unmethodical and indecisive. Although conservative, the unhappily married woman likes to think of herself as a radical. "She lacks the warm sympathy and emotional balance of the happily married woman and the rugged individualism, ambition, and efficiency of the divorced."

### DIVORCE AND PERSONALITY

We now come to the divorced woman who seems to stand out from the two other female groups. She is usually self-assertive, self-reliant, possesses initiative and a definite purpose. She more often leads in activities, especially now that divorce is not considered a scandal any longer. She is more inclined to be unconventional, will ignore the feelings or criticism of others. She will take risks and face difficult situations, she will prefer to make hurried decisions, and will meet emergencies. Divorced women are not docile, they will not take orders and prefer to work for themselves or run a department. They are tolerant of other people's ac-

tion but do not show the same tolerance for teetotalers, clergymen and cautious people. The reason may be easily surmised.

Divorced men and women have more intellectual interests than either the happily or unhappily married people.

At this point some of the readers, like myself, will begin to wonder whether the state of divorce can be correlated with definite personality traits. In the case of unhappily married men and women, the same question crops up, yet it offers much less difficulty; for even if a number of individuals are *made* unhappy because of the behavior of the spouse, the number of such instances in both sexes will in the long run cancel each other, thus leaving us with a basis for correlation between a happy state of matrimony and personality traits. Even so, unless we have an analysis of the state of unhappiness, the reasons for it, we are not fully justified in drawing any conclusions.

The state of divorce, however, is more complicated. To speak of a divorcée, as if she were the individual to have taken the initiative in the parting, is not altogether justifiable. We must first of all know not only who brought the libel to court, but which of the parties *wanted* the divorce, and in addition we ought to have an idea of the causes, which must naturally be too intricate a matter to disentangle.

Unless we possess the qualitative data, the statistical results cannot but be vitiated by extraneous factors. If *e. g.*, fifty women out of the 300 should happen to

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be divorced because their husbands found a younger and more attractive woman as a prospective wife or mistress, could we reasonably expect a correspondence between that fact and the personality traits of the divorced women, or at least the same type of correlation as would obtain between the condition of divorce and personality, if, let us say, it was discovered that a large percentage of the divorced women were anxious to be released from their matrimonial bond in order to marry someone who is better established either socially or financially? The assumption underlying the Terman-Buttenwieser results seems to be that divorce is wholly the consequence of maladjustment and maladaptation on both sides.

### UNKNOWN FACTORS

A few of the questions asked by the investigators are:

Are your feelings easily hurt?

When caught in a mistake, do you usually make excuses?

Is your advice sought by many?

Can you correct others without giving offence?

Do you show firmness without being easy?

Can you carry out plans assigned by other people?

No matter what the questions, I have serious misgivings as to whether any list could be drawn up which anybody could rate himself on. Suppose we asked people to rate themselves as to whether they

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- (a) would bring up again and again a mistake someone had made to cause them an injury
- (b) are jealous
- (c) can accept fair criticism
- (d) would be nice to parents-in-law
- (e) would adjust themselves to circumstances, such as depression or recession.

I should not be willing to place too much faith in the validity of the ratings, for one reason that comparatively few people realize the situation involved, or have sufficient imagination. Still fewer know *themselves*, and not a few are not honest with themselves, even when they are playing a game of solitaire.

It may strike the reader as a bit paradoxical, but compatibility, as I see it, is based on (a) physical attraction, (b) constancy, (c) patience (d) adaptability, and, last but not least, (e) understanding, or judgment.

The most outstanding barriers to an unhappily married life are: narcissism (*i. e.*, being in love with oneself to such a degree as to take credit for exaggerated charms, virtues, or excellence), the inability to see one's flaws while magnifying those of others, an irritable temper, jealousy, nagging, stubbornness, emotional instability, and lack of judgment.

Almost any conceivable wrinkle can become a real menace or can be ironed out in terms of the above traits (both positive and negative). Understanding is more than mere intelligence. It is intelligence plus sympathy minus ego. Where other qualities clash, it is still possible to reach a solution, if understanding prevails.

Chapter XI

SENSE AND NONSENSE ABOUT  
GRAPHOLOGY



## XI

### GRAPHOLOGY AS SEEN BY A PSYCHOLOGIST

The psychologist who espouses the cause of graphology undoubtedly gives hostages to his reputation. That psychologists should take a negative stand against a branch out of their own science might surprise us, yet there are many reasons for this attitude.

To begin with, the popular interest in graphology and the fact that many newspapers run columns in which the writing of this or that star is glibly analysed, and offer supposedly individual charts to readers for ten cents, are bound to turn the scientists against the study itself. Of course this is silly; for goodness knows there is a plentiful supply of psychological and, for that matter, medical quacks in America. Would it then be logical to turn up our nose at psychology or medicine?

There was a time — little do we realize it — when bacteriology was regarded as something doubtful. Fifty years ago, abnormal psychology was not taught in universities. Psychiatry was just beginning to be recognized in the last generation. As to sociology, until a few years ago, Harvard University had no department devoted to this discipline.

Sciences, like their founders and pioneers, must

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fight for recognition; and graphology, far from being an exception, is subject to a peculiar fate of its own.

It reminds one so much of the quackeries like astrology and numerology and the extravaganzas of palmistry and phrenology. It seems to demand little knowledge and to offer a great deal. To a scientist, strangely enough, every method purporting to reveal hidden human traits is strongly under suspicion. It is also said that the analyses of the graphologist are couched in such indefinite terms that they could be widely interpreted.

American psychologists, again, are dissatisfied with graphology because it does not lend itself to statistical treatment; and a few experiments conducted with a view to testing the principles of graphology have yielded no positive results. These experiments are referred to again and again in order to discredit the claims of graphology. At this juncture it is enough to state that *the* graphological experiment is yet to be made. When it is completed with the participation of unbiased psychologists and *bona fide* graphologists, the verdict is likely to be not the Scotch version.

### ARGUMENTS AGAINST GRAPHOLOGY

We have all heard the familiar arguments: "Oh, but I write differently at different times." "What about the pen and paper?" "I was taught to write the Palmer method; that's why I write like that." "I know a man who disguises his handwriting perfectly", and



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many other contentions of this sort, which would tend to make short shrift of graphology as a science.

My own position a dozen years ago, before the late Dr. Saudek sent me his books, was a bit skeptical, or shall we say, ambivalent. I did not doubt the fundamental principles of graphology. Almost any intelligent person surely realizes that if every gesture or other expressive movement reveals something of our personality, our handwriting, in that it contains so many of our expressive movements on a highly meaningful level and in concentrated form, must surely reflect our personality in a large measure.

But how do we know that this or that curlicue means such and such a trait? There was the rub. I often thought of the dreambooks in this connection, each of which is only a rehash or repetition of its predecessor. People who dabble in graphology, it seemed to me, would not bother to critically examine the rules laid down by others. They would be, if not actually gullible, at least too indolent to investigate further, and would snatch at anything which was in the least suggestive.

The average psychologist's mind runs in this channel. Even if he should obtain an analysis of a script which would indicate that there is something solid behind it all, he would immediately think of fortune-telling, where the fortune-teller might also guess right sometimes !

Let me point out, therefore, that when I submitted a number of the most miscellaneous handwriting specimens (called technically "scripts") to the late Dr.

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Robert Saudek, in London, it was with the intention of proving the problematical nature of the art. The analyses which were returned promptly astonished me. This was not a case of hedging, or employing "maybes" and "ifs", but delineated character traits as though the person were familiar to the analyst.

It was my belief then that Saudek possessed a peculiar art, but was graphology to be regarded as a science? It was not difficult for him to show me that his assistant could also do the same trick. Soon after the premature death of Dr. Saudek, I was in touch with others manifesting a similar ability; and what amazed me, I found myself making character estimates of correspondents whom I had never seen but who were known to acquaintances.

I have discovered since that graphology is by no means as easy as ABC, that there are few graphologists who, by virtue of their training and experience, are worthy of their name, that graphology, like medicine, is both a science and an art. You may know the rules, but cannot apply them sufficiently to make a diagnosis, and furthermore, that even the best graphologists, like the best physicians, make their mistakes. One must concede, too, that not all the signs are universally accepted. There are scores of curious formations which we know nothing about, but which may some day under experimental conditions be properly interpreted.

### OBSERVATION MINUTE IN GRAPHOLOGY

The value of graphology lies not only in bringing to the surface, qualities which represent the writer, but

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in its methods of observation. To describe every mark in a few lines of script requires not only an alert mind but a discipline which school children could be taught to the best advantage. I don't know of a single science which necessitates such minute perception and discrimination in its raw material. Those who believe that one could become a graphologist in a few weeks or even months are *naïve*, to say the least. The most elementary training needs a year or more, aside from experience.

The task in graphology is not to ascertain whether the actor Byng Fables is affectionate or Jane Foy is reserved, but involves some of the most complex problems in human nature. In my approach to graphology, I have not spared the shortcomings of this study. Graphologists have taken me to be inappreciative, perhaps hardboiled. Some of the puzzles have not been cleared up, but my faith in graphology is unshaken, and my insight into personality has been broadened, thanks to the revelations of graphology. In other words, some of the seeming contradictions in the handwriting point to a fresh understanding of certain traits.

### REACTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGISTS UNJUST

The reaction against graphology in intelligent circles may be explained variously. Quite a few will not have themselves associated with what they consider a popular fad. It may be mentioned here that psychology, too, is looked down upon by many thousands who don't know how to spell the word, let alone define or

describe it. There are those who damn graphology by pointing out that no university offers a course in it, although a few experiments have been conducted in this connection. I have noticed, too, that those whose handwriting would not receive a favorable analysis sense the situation or receive a clue and turn against the study. A noted graphologist, referring to the general hostility to graphology in the psychological camp, suggested that many psychologists are afraid that graphology might supplant some of their own methods (tests, questionnaires, etc.). Perhaps there is a grain of truth in this supposition, as the weakness of professional zeal, even among the able, is too well-known, but far from undermining the foundations of psychology, graphology itself must be grounded in psychology. The twaddle we often find in popular graphological expositions is due just to this circumstance — the innocence of psychology on the part of the writers.

A priceless sample of unreasonableness was exhibited, as might have been expected, by a woman who was decidedly skeptical about the possibilities of graphology. When she was invited to submit a specimen of her handwriting for experimental purposes, she copied some verse, which I promptly forwarded to Dr. Saudek. She showed no enthusiasm over the analysis when it reached her in due course; and only much later did she disclose the cause of her indifference. She could not see how such an accurate delineation could be based on copied material, and therefore concluded that Dr. Saudek, in this case, was none other than the present writer. Many

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academic psychologists, while somewhat more guarded in their cavils, frequently harbor similar groundless suspicions.

### THE HANDWRITING EXPERT'S ATTITUDE

The attitude of court experts in identification is not difficult to account for. They invariably disown graphology, not only because they have made it their business to specialize in something which will net them a fine penny in a major case, but because they would like to be considered as moving on the plane of positive science, alongside of the chemists and the pathologists, and any adhesion of an allied science would imperil their standing in the eyes of the court. In reality, a knowledge of graphology would aid them in their scientific quest rather than hinder them.

It is only a matter of years, and graphology will win the recognition which it enjoys in Europe. The books of Saudek, Klages, Crépieux-Jamin and Pulver are studied not only in their own respective countries but throughout the world, and among the patrons of the French Graphological Society are to be found the names of the most distinguished philosophers and scientists in France. To enumerate the scores of celebrities who believed in the fundamentals of graphology from Goethe down to Bergson, would, of course, not convince any one who is prejudiced, but it is sufficient to indicate that graphology could not be classed with palmistry or astrology; and the trend is to consider it with more favorable eyes in university circles.

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We may speculate about what would happen if people in general got to know about the significance of their handwriting. Would it not cause them to change their style, and study all the ways of improving handwriting graphologically? That, indeed, would be the natural outcome, if it were not true that *you could not change your expressive movements without also changing the mental or moral constitution which is responsible for those movements*. Of course, one might disguise the handwriting, but the disguise would be seen through by the expert, or at least the contradiction would be evident before the end of the specimen; and the effort would have been made in vain.

It is a mistake, however, to suppose that most individuals, or even a great many, would make an attempt to write differently. After all, there are plenty of faults of an obvious nature that our attention may be called to, actual faults, "in person" we might say, as the cinema posters put it, and not symbolic reflections of faults, which the marks on paper are, and yet how few of us are willing to give them up? How much less then will a person bother to change his style which he naturally considers, like his own personality, good enough?

It is quite possible, too, that if anyone were to succeed in disguising his natural style, the reaction on his nervous system would be such as to bring about impediments in its wake. You can fool some of the people all the time, but you can't fool your nervous system at any time. That is the moral which graphology teaches us.

Chapter XII

SENSE IN MUSIC





## XII

### MUSIC AND MORONITY

Since art is usually contrasted with science and philosophy, there is reason to believe that many musicians will scoff at the thought that common sense is to be sought in music. Music, they will point out, is not in the least related to logic or reasoning. It is the immediate expression of the emotions which characterizes music; and therefore, it is not to be burdened with a category akin to truth. The anecdote of the mathematics professor who was persuaded by a student to attend a concert will be recalled here. After the concert, as the student beamingly inquired how his teacher liked the music, the latter indifferently said, "Well, what did it prove, after all?"

I am not concerned here with establishing the fact that music does prove anything. Personally it is my belief that it proves all that it reveals; and it reveals a great deal.

### IDEAS AND REASON IN MUSIC

Even if it is granted that music is primarily concerned with beauty, it is not altogether devoid of the groundwork of science. For one thing, it is governed by rules; and even such apostles of atonality as Schön-

berg, Alban Berg, and Hindemith, though they may defy the traditional rules of harmony, dare not set at naught all principles of construction. On the contrary, they and others of the more extreme modernistic schools, far from lapsing into a state of musical anarchy, rigidly adhere to a definite system of composition.

There is one term which is employed both in music and in logic to designate fixity of order, and that is the "canon", which bears a much more elaborate sense in the sphere of composition than in logic. Then, too, we speak of the development of *ideas* in music. It is Beethoven's stress on ideas which has singled him out from among so many immortals. Many of his contemporaries are known to us only as authors of excellent finger exercises, or of fine teaching manuals. They were engrossed in technique, in creating effects, improvising cadenzas or glissandos, and spurned the ideational element, the substrate of significance, which alone can provide a conscious goal in any masterpiece. Where is the promise of Cherubini, Moscheles, Spohr, Thalberg, and Rubinstein? For all their productiveness in the form of concertos, operas, ballets, and even symphonies, not to mention chamber music and lighter forms, they are extremely rare visitors on concert programmes; and their unique virtuosity, as in the case of Moscheles and Rubinstein, is all that posterity, thanks to their contemporaries, knows of them. Their art spent itself in the didactic, interpretative (only to some extent, as a few of them would play only their own compositions) and technical phases of music.

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When someone says he does not "*understand*" Bach or Brahms, he is speaking in terms of intelligence, intimating that there is some sense which he cannot perceive in the music. The irony of it is that often the very people (mainly young) who fail to see anything coherent in the works of genius profess to make sense out of some of the ultra-modernistic compositions of our day — and as to swing "music", they appear to understand it *via* their feet, shoulders, or even breasts, certainly not through their æsthetic sentiment. Music to them is not a sensory matter but altogether motor. I once remarked to a physician that "Barney Google", which he liked very much, was by no means a sample of art. "Ah", he replied, "but it certainly makes a fine fox-trot."

What he did not appear to recognize is that there have been some excellent fox-trots and other dance numbers which have combined good tonal effects with clear ideas, *e. g.*, in addition to a dozen of the *blues* and torch songs, "The Whip", "Titina", (This air was the only vocal attempt Charlie Chaplin made when he sang it to Esperanto words in the film "Modern Times") "Thou Swell", "Hallelujah", "Collegiate", "The Continental", "The Varsity Drag", "He Ain't Got Rhythm", "Let's Go Slumming", "Satan Takes a Holiday", and many others which strike a somewhat novel note and, at the same time, proceed in a progressive manner without allowing the tawdry frills to spoil the melody, while the various local dances, the cariocas, rumbas, congas, and particularly the insinuating tangos are often in-

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stinct with reflective commentaries on life. Of these I regard *El Choclo* on a par with the best dance music in the classical albums, whether mazurkas, hopaks, gavottes, polonaises, czardas, gigue, fandangos, pavaues, minuets, or sarabandes. It welds the past and the present with such consummate skill, offsetting Mozartian restrained chivalry against Spanish-American langorous sensuousness, that the comparatively obscure composer discloses a mind of unusual perspicacity. Dance music to him is not only a motor reaction. He has grasped the meaning of the contrast between the sexes, the ages (young and old) and the historical epochs. His musical maturity cannot be questioned.

### MUSICAL AGE

Not so long ago the age of an individual would be computed solely in terms of years lived. A man was twenty or thirty years old if he was born two or three decades back.

Alfred Binet, by standardizing his universally known tests, introduced another kind of age; and we began to talk about a *mental* age as well as of a *chronological* age. The mental age is the level of intelligence reached by the majority of normal people of such and such a chronological age. You may be thirty-five years old and possess the intelligence of a twelve-year-old child, although you cannot be twelve years old and possess a thirty-five-year-old intelligence, for the technical reason that after the adolescent period, intelligence as

such does not grow, except in comparatively few cases, but is exploited by experience.

The concept of mental age has given impetus to the quest for other kinds of ages. Child psychologists began to speak of an *anatomical* age, determined by the maturity of the bone structure. Alienists, in defense of criminals, made a great deal of an *emotional* age, depending on the amount of feeling an individual has for his fellow-beings, *e. g.*, a twenty-year-old murderer may, supposedly, be so constituted as to have the emotional make-up of a child of six.

#### NORMS AND STANDARDS IN MUSIC

Why we have not heard up to now that there might also be a musical age is surprising; for in spite of the hoary saying *de gustibus non disputandum*, there is certainly an incontestable standard in music, which suggests a scale of values. It matters little if Beethoven disdains the music of Cherubini or Mendelssohn dubs Chopin "Chopinetto", or Wagner holds in contempt both Meyerbeer and Brahms (It was late in life that he deigned to compliment the latter). The issue is not between creative musicians, with their prejudices and biases, but a matter of non-creative appreciation. In general there is agreement as to standards among musically inclined people; and this consensus is a function of musical maturity and sometimes precocity. If we have not yet our musicality quotient (M. Q.) and nomenclature to correspond with the moron, imbecile, and

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idiot categories of the intelligence gradation, it is because the subject has been in the hands of specialists who considered merely the technical angle of music.

Probably many of us will remember how some of the school tunes irked us at an early age. I can still recall the shock that ran through my spine when the music inspector of the public schools, a little stilted man with a small goatee and a huge Adam's apple, initiated our primary class into the mysteries of singing, using for his theme

*Once there was a pretty mouse  
And he had a little house.*

I was only seven, but felt at the time that the "lyrics", and even more so the melody, were intended for someone years younger than the children in the class. As the music lessons became more advanced in the upper grades, I was wondering how anyone could endure such soporific songs as *Annie Laurie* or mollicoddle hymns like *Onward Christian Soldiers*, to which we were subjected. What a relief to have also had at the time invigorating tunes like *Scots Wha Hae* or inspired airs like Handel's *Sound the Loud Timbrel*, although at that age I knew neither the significance of the great Scotch hymn of independence nor who Handel was. The air of *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes* always struck me as a tight-laced hymn, rather than a romantic melody.

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### MAWKISHNESS NOT SENTIMENT

Of *God Save the King* I think with a shudder. To have heard that moronic tune every day for years, repeated again and again until all the verses were exhausted, is enough of a punishment, but on crossing the border to have found that I was due for the same series of drones in the singing of *My Country 'Tis of Thee* was truly disconcerting. To be sure *The Star Spangled Banner* was sublime as compared with its Canadian analogue, (before the advent of the inspired *O, Canada*, which I only recently was able to trace to the "Priests' Chorus" in Mozart's *Magic Flute*) but there were other musical drawbacks in the United States, e. g., *My Old Kentucky Home* and *Down by the Swanee River*.

I have learned since that the air of *God Save the King* substantially occurs in one of Brahms' overtures, but that did not serve to lessen its infantility. In the overture, the few moronic measures may have a purpose to describe some situation or mentality, but a feast of moronity in several verses is altogether a different story.

There are always individuals whose sense of patriotism is outraged when either the musical setting or the words of their national anthem are criticized. This puerile attitude has amused me. If I say that *God Save the King* is doggerel, so far as the words are concerned, I am by no means guilty of blasphemy or *lèse majesté*. On the contrary, I think that Great Britain and its

sovereigns deserve a better national anthem. But perhaps there is something pedagogical about this type of anthem, which is intended for children, in the first instance, imbuing them with patriotism, so that when they grow up, the memories of their impressionable childhood days would make the particular hymn sound all the more vivid. In other words, it means so much to individuals now because it was associated with their first years in school. Certainly a really melodious tune would be too advanced for many of the children, in those days, particularly, when music was not so much in the air as it is now, but there are happy mediums like "Rule Britannia", which in spite of its bombast is a stirring and inspiring composition, appealing to those with an ear for good music as well as to the relatively unmusical.

Another feature of the *God Save the King* and *America* air is that it can be remembered and sung by all who are not too defective mentally or literally dumb. The range of notes is not nearly so wide as that of *The Star Spangled Banner*.

It would be instructive to establish through a questionnaire, circulated in musical centres, the titles of the ten most moronic tunes which have gained a wide hearing. In addition to those already cited, I should mention *Home Sweet Home*, *The Lost Chord*, (with due respect to the genius of Sullivan, whose secular music is such a far cry from his sacred songs) and one or two jazz and swing numbers (I might have said two



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or three hundred, but as most new swing is really the rehash of old numbers, then the minimum mentioned is sufficient for our purpose.)

Just why some of these tunes should have captured the country is difficult to explain. In many cases, the low M. Q. of the average person in the street is a sufficient reason. Quite often, the *association* of happy childhood memories, in other words, to speak behavioristically, the *conditioned reflex* will account for the predilection. In still other cases, as in *Home Sweet Home*, the *sentiment* is all-important. *The Lost Chord* sounds tolerable when sung by a trained chorus.

### TASTE OF AVERAGE YOUTH TODAY

It is significant that the worse the tune, the more chance it has to become a "hit" with the young set. Among recent musical infantile delights are, "The Music Goes Round and Round", "The Hurdy-Gurdy Swing", "Three Little Fishies", "A-Tisket A-Tasket", and "Cry, Baby, Cry". The vulgarizations of symphonic and other artistic *motifs*, like the first movement of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* overture, are nothing short of sacrilege. As I was listening to the latter only last week, someone expressed surprise that I should care for it, since it was a swing song, not recognizing the fact that there is all the difference in the world between the two versions. Swing music is moronic, not because of the fact that most morons like it, but because it never has a single idea. It consists of a mutilated and dessi-

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cated tune (borrowed generally from a well-known composition) interrupted by a never-ending series of squeaks and squawks, screeches, rumblings, quacks and clucks.

Bad as the swing numbers are, the crooning we incessantly hear is even of a more imbecile character. Many of the cheaper sort restaurants (even though the meals are expensive) are equipped with loud noise contraptions which honorifically are called "symphonolas", but generically are often referred to as "nickelodeons". Perhaps "nickelodiums" would be a more appropriate name. Why anyone should spend five cents in order to inflict this kind of torment on the diners, some of whom at least are definitely annoyed by the raucous, and usually amplified, crooning impinging upon their eardrums, is not easy to understand. My own theory is that many adolescent adults, like children who want to constantly press the horn-button so as to emit a honk, suppose that they are making history by turning a relatively quiet place into a noisy one.

In this crooning nuisance, not only the tune or rather repetitious tunelessness is at fault. The voice drawls with stentorian intensity in a tempo that is a good deal slower than the flow of molasses — and *that* apparently is appreciated by millions of young and older people throughout the country. No wonder one of these so-called songs is entitled "I Double Dare You."

The improvisations of a youngster (I don't mean of the Mozart species) would, I think, if recorded, compare favorably with at least some of the song hits

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which we hear over the radio, usually after midnight and often during the day.

If the adolescents of today are just "crazy" about "hot jazz", their more sedate parents will be apt to become entranced when they hear such tunes as Godard's *Berceuse* (from "Jocelyn") or Drdla's *Souvenir* on the organ, played on the tremolo stop — tunes which are annoyingly boresome to begin with. It is perhaps not surprising that so many of the old folks (if not chronologically, then at least mentally) will suppose that a magnificent instrument like the organ can be worried with an affectation born of bathos, but that a trained organist could bring himself to commit such a sin in the name of art is astonishing indeed.

With a certain type of individual, *repetition* serves to enhance the appeal of the tune. It is apt to make a greater impression on him mentally because the neural grooves in the cortex of the temporal lobe are being deepened. Needless to say that this group of individuals is worthy of receiving the musical booby prize or the crown of musical moronity.

### REPETITION IN MUSIC

Repetition, to be sure, is a well-known technical device in music to convey the monotony of a place, *e. g.*, the dreariness and sultriness of the Sahara or the steady downpour of the sun's rays in Italy, or occasionally the persistence of a bizarre thought. Sometimes, too, we are eager to hear a complicated passage again and again

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in order to exploit all the variations and modulations, fraught with meaning, which could not be caught even in half a dozen hearings, but when the regular Saturday-nighters of popular concerts must have their *Largo* and *Kammenoi Ostrov* as invariably as their favorite relish, we must regard this hankering after repetition as symptomatic of a particular mentality and musical level. They belong in the same class with the children who are convulsed with laughter every time the clown trips, or with the vaudeville frequenters who are in stitches when the comedian's pants for the fifteenth time are on the verge of falling down and are pulled up again. The tolerance for repetition and monotony (and I am using the word in a medical context) is in itself a revealing sign of one's personality.

The subject of repetition in music, so far as I know, has never been treated before. Perhaps it has never been thought important enough. The probability is, however, that when this matter is investigated, a good deal of light will be thrown on an important phase of typology: the types of composers, types of music, and types of appreciators.

It has occurred to me more than once that in music there is much more repetition than in any of the other arts, with the exception of the purely decorative branch, where the design is intended to show uniformity of detail, and dancing, which offers comparatively little facility for variation. (If we dignify Gertrude Stein's stunts with the name of literature, we might include her efforts among the exceptions.) The *Leitmotif* in

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opera is a universally employed device which serves to bring out the essence of a particular operatic character or event. In Wagner's operas, the *Leitmotif* has been so overdone as to become monotonous, even if it has been apotheosized in some quarters. Puccini's operas, particularly *La Bohême*, seem to make judicious use of representative short themes, so that Rodolfo is associated with one melodious sequence and Mimi with another; while in *Carmen*, the ominous fate motive, of Moorish origin, occurs always at some crucial moment in order to prepare the listener for the final tragedy. The opera as a whole is delightfully free from repetition, except once or twice, as an associative suggestion.

In other forms of music, the *Leitmotif* is used for the purpose of both polarizing the composition by bringing into prominence its outstanding characteristic, and by its recurrence serving to unify the subsidiary parts into a sort of framework. Possibly if a composition were devoid of the slightest repetition, its unity would be impaired. On the other hand, if the leading motive is repeated too often, the work smacks of banality and triteness, no matter how striking the theme might originally have been.

Repetition in music may range anywhere from a single note or phrase to a whole theme. The recurrence may be in immediate succession or spaced over considerable intervals. The shorter repetitions are somewhat puzzling because the pleasing element to be found in a melodious passage, which requires at least a phrase or two, is missing. Perhaps it is not strange that an in-

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comprehensible like Beethoven should have shown no partiality to the longer passages in this respect.

In listening to some of this titan's music, let us say the finale of the Fifth Symphony, I often asked myself why a mere measure must be repeated four or five times in succession. Would the symphony lose its perfect form if the phrase recurred only twice? Knowing the care which Beethoven bestowed upon his craftsmanship, I can only surmise that he was aware of its purpose, but I could not help thinking to myself "Well, that was just once too often. I wonder whether it was not simply a case of *perseveration*," that is to say, an application of the law of inertia in a creative sphere. There are many passages in Beethoven where he seems to give evidence of some difficulty in starting, as if his motor stalled on him. Stumbling and faltering, he begins anew, and yet again, until he emerges triumphantly. Of one thing we may be quite certain, and that is that Beethoven did not need to resort to repetition for lack of ideas. As regards inventive opulence and thematic diversity, not even Bach, in my opinion, could rank with him.

### TYPES OF REPETITION

Happily, repetition need not constitute a simple reiteration of the same notes, but usually is carried out through subtle variations — change of key, tempo, rhythm, intensity, giving the melody to different instruments, and moving from the major mode to the minor,

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or vice versa, adding a figuration to the original motive, or else simplifying it to a staccato form. Thus while the melody remains basically the same, it is exploited in so many different ways, that a slice of life in all its vicissitudes unfolds itself kaleidoscopically before us, affording us that intellectual enjoyment which we call appreciation. Of all the composers, Beethoven is probably the master of such emotional manipulations through variations which do not diverge too far from the original motive.

One source of repetition in music is undoubtedly due to what I called the "personal idiom" in my little book on *Personality*. Ernest Newman, in *The Unconscious Beethoven*, has drawn attention to a peculiar ascending succession of notes in many of Beethoven's works, which leads him to believe that the particular curve is a reflection of the great composer's subconscious. That may well be, but in regard to repetition, it is quite likely that genius is often haunted by a certain phrase or theme which, although frequently in a slightly different guise, interlopes now and then, on appropriate occasions.

Perhaps such phrases are characteristic of the composer's personality. Possibly they are reminiscences of a dim past. At any rate, nearly all music lovers must have discovered similar musical snatches running through several works of a given composer. Bach's chorales and fugues contain bits of his Passion music and concertos. Some of Beethoven's overtures (*Leonore*, *Coriolanus*, *Egmont*) are in places reminiscent of passages in his

symphonies. César Franck's *Symphonic Variations* hark back to his symphony. Brahms, too, in his *Variations on a Theme from Haydn*, conceived some ideas which he was to incorporate later in his symphonies. In Grieg's popular piano concerto in A minor we find vestiges of *Asa's Death*; and Saint-Saëns' hackneyed *Swan Song* is reflected in his cello concerto.

I could go on citing example after example of such duplication. Is the composer aware that he had already made use of the same theme? Probably he is in the same position as a writer who incorporates a similar scene, episode, passage or metaphor in different works of his. The man who will make it his task to weed out all traces of repetition is yet to be born. The personal idiom is no less a part of the genius than his characteristic gait or gesture. Nevertheless, it would be a fruitful piece of investigation to test compositions as to their wearing qualities both by subjecting music appreciators and non-appreciators to a number of hearings of the same record. It would be particularly interesting, in addition, to experiment with a major composition in which repetition of phrase or theme has been reduced to a minimum or as far as possible eliminated. Since Schumann's *Second Symphony in C Major* contains more than one obsessive passage (a phrase which runs throughout the second scherzo, with an inflection like the threat of a mischievous boy saying with increased emphasis, "I'll get even with you", and the caressing hymn-like ditty in the finale) it might very well serve as a basis for an experiment of this sort. Per-



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haps the recurrent passages in various composers may be the sublimated expression of what Freud calls "*repetition-compulsion*". (See his *Moses and Monotheism*, page 119).

In many instances, to be sure, the repetition is most essential. In the second movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony, we are supposed to receive the impression of the waves aimlessly rolling on and on. In *The Ride of the Valkyries*, the recurrence, gradually gaining in intensity and pitch, just as in the *Halls of the Mountain King* (Peer Gynt), repetition through increased intensity and accelerated tempo describes the progress of the laborious march. In Debussy's *Nuages*, we have the slowly drifting clouds suggesting the languorous repetition.

Dance music generally is repetitious, making use of one or two patterns varying in tempo and intensity, frequently leading up to a frenzied climax. Ravel's *Bolero* is an adequate illustration of the latter.

### WEARING AND WEARYING MUSIC

Radio broadcasting has unwittingly (in some cases, we might say "nitwittingly") supplied the means of experimentation on repetition. At times, one could hear a street tune half a dozen times a day. You might turn off the dial for one station and turn to another only to hear the same musical "gem". The theme song which initiates various programs on the radio offers some food for thought, and at times cause for action.

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After listening for many weeks to a recording programme which featured the well-known first theme of the third movement of Brahms' third symphony, I was impelled to write the station as follows:

It is surprising to me that you would impose upon music lovers, as your audience for the recordings would naturally be, a theme song for many weeks that could barely stand the wear of even a few hearings.

It is not at all strange that the young man who cared so little for Brahms' music should be taken with this particular part of the third symphony, since it is by all odds the most commonplace of all of Brahms' productions. The movement, by the way, in which this theme runs ostentatiously is the first portion of any of Brahms' symphonies to have been recorded — another indication of its nugatoriness.

I think personally that it is almost a slur on the intelligence of music lovers to have to listen day in and day out to some sort of theme-song, as if they were readers of the various screen magazines. At any rate, there are certain themes that wear and others that do not. The theme for the 11:15 p. m. period, for example, is something that could be heard indefinitely because of the modesty and chastity that this 'motif' from the 'Moonlight Sonata' expresses. That, however, is by no means true of the particular strain from Brahms. It strikes me that it would be much better, if some trade mark is to be used in order to identify a particular period or programme on the radio, to present a few phrases each time from a different composer, particularly of the old Italian school.

I hope you will regard this as constructive criticism; at any rate, a suggestion from a music lover who is appreciative of your service in educating the public.

It ought to be explained that the student referred to had written to this broadcasting station requesting those responsible for the programmes to avoid heavy

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and dull music like Brahms' symphonies, and asking for the full recording of "the piece" the daily theme came from, in blissful ignorance of the fact that he was wishing on himself a Brahms symphony, which he considered dull. The probability is that the young man belongs to the class of people who like a melody only after they hear it frequently enough to be able to whistle it, or else if it resembles something with which they are already familiar.

The contrast between the Brahms theme in question and that of the *Moonlight Sonata* with regard to repetition was an eye-opener to me. The former will appeal to us far more than the latter, to begin with, but it peters out in our æsthetic economy, because it is too pretentious (one of the very few inconsequential and sentimental passages in the extraordinarily ingenious and sterlingly genuine Brahms) while the *Moonlight Sonata* passage which consists, for the most part, of a recurrence of a simple ascending phrase does not produce anything like a thrill in us at the outset, but to compensate, it is a uniform and constant comforter (within certain bounds) as time goes on.

It is with music as with people: the aggressive and brazen individual may make a striking impression at first, but on every successive occasion he is seen and heard, he drops a peg, while the reserved person is apt to rise in our estimation the more we draw him out. To avoid misunderstanding it may be said that strongly accented music (like Schubert's) or even martial strains are not necessarily aggressive.

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS: ON REPETITION

In my experience, I have come to the conclusion that music in the minor mode will stand repetition far better than music in the major mode, that the higher pitched strains will be favored in this respect as against those in a low pitch or in a bass key; and furthermore, that interrogative curves will not tire us so much as declarative curves. The timbre, tempo and rhythm are important factors too. In spite of the fact that to my Occidental ear, typical Chinese music consists of but one theme, I am eager to listen to it again and again because of its interrogative characteristics.

From what has been just said, it may be gathered that when a low C is intoned regularly on a church bell every 20 seconds or so, for fifteen minutes at a stretch, those who are unfortunate enough to live close by have reason to complain. That there are so few who are extremely annoyed by such pointless pealing is an enigma to me. What is still worse, when one woman in the neighborhood, who could endure the monotony no longer, in her distressed state telephoned (of all places) the police station, she was told "Madam, those bells have tolled for the past 87 years, and they will go on tolling for the rest of your life." Newspaper columnists made sport of this unnamed woman, with whom I sympathize very much; and, I suppose, from the point of view of adjustment to the environment, she would be regarded as a neurotic.

According to the thesis laid down earlier in this

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book (See chapter IV) the woman, although she resorted to the wrong agency to have her grievance redressed, evinced a sensibleness which is altogether too uncommon. There is no reason in the world why a nuisance which does no one any good should continue to go on just because it has gone on for 87 years, or for that matter 870 years; nor is it at all clear why in order to avoid the stigma of neuroticism, a person must adjust himself or herself to all sorts of conditions, no matter how unreasonable or stupid. This particular topic has been treated at length, on a more significant level, in the chapter "Character and Adjustment" of my *Psychology of Character*. The proverb "What cannot be cured must be endured" is both practical and wholesome, but natural conditions are one thing, and human impositions are quite another.

### NERVE-RACKING CHURCH BELLS

This very annoyance was a problem with which I myself had to grapple for years. Afflicted with an aversion for repetition in connection with the higher senses (vision and hearing) I could nevertheless tolerate with equanimity instrumental exercises, and even the necessary noises and clangs of subway and elevated trains or railroad engines and fire apparatus (although the screeching siren is less pleasant than the bells formerly in use), yes, even the clanking of dishes in restaurants.

Church bells, not especially carillon tunes, have had a peculiar fascination for me, whether they sounded,

in a tinkling fashion, the end of the first watch in the dead of night, or announced the matin a few hours later, or whether they intoned the Vespers or Angelus. The festive peals on a Sunday or holiday of a dozen cathedral bells mingling with one another in an improvised and carefree fugue, the quizzical chimes at baptism, the joyous ringing at weddings, and the sad knells at burials — they each had their specific meaning, which one misses in Protestant communities.

Chimes, in particular, affect the heartstrings in a manner which scarcely any other instrument is capable of doing. I recall once spending an extra night in New Haven only to listen to the ten o'clock chimes at Yale University. The exquisite delicacy of the timbre, as well as the soulful reflectiveness of the phrase intoned, still lingers as an enchanted memory; and it is regrettable that the varied chimes for different hours have been discontinued at Yale. The unforgettable effect of the apparently rival chimes at Oxford, I have described in *Personality; the Crux of Social Intercourse*.

In spite, or perhaps because, of this fondness for church peals and chimes, I have been so irked by the monotonous repetition of the church bells around Harvard Square that I appealed to several different authorities asking them not to dispose of the practice altogether, but to relieve the monotony by instituting certain changes.

To the Boston Noise Commission, which invited complaints against unnecessary noise-making, I wrote,

## *Music and Moronity*

The worst kind of nuisance I find is the Baptist Church on Massachusetts Avenue, between Quincy and Remington Streets, Cambridge, because of its frightfully lugubrious and monotonous tolling for fifteen minutes every Sunday morning about 10:15. Although St. Paul's Church, close by, strikes every quarter of an hour, its sound is mellow and varied, while that of the Baptist Church is like a groan. I have heard some complaints about it in the past. How that sort of graveyard sound can attract any one to church is beyond me; and what right a church has to peal monotonously for fifteen minutes, once every 20 seconds or so, is something I can't understand. Do worshippers have to be awakened or primed up? What if the theatres, arenas, Boston Garden, and other amusement places tried this stunt to indicate when the flock is to get ready!

To the late clergyman of the offending church the following letter was addressed:

I hope you will not take amiss my writing you about the Sunday morning peals of your church at 10:15, which have annoyed me and others in the neighborhood for years, until I have decided to submit both my complaints and suggestions to you and the Board of the Church.

It is not the church chimes as such that I am protesting against, as I am especially fond of church bells and remember with delight the expressive bells of Oxford and Yale as well as the pealing of the Montreal churches, but it is the deadly monotony of a sound which is like a groan or a cat's meow, two octaves low, repeated without variation in pitch, tempo, or even intensity one hundred times, by count, and then after a brief pause, the same sound repeated probably another fifty times at a somewhat longer interval, which makes it even more painful to hear. That the musical members of your church can stand such unrelieved repetition amazes me.

Now since the church has been closed for a few weeks, and the bells have not been functioning, I thought this recess would be a propitious time for instituting a

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change. May I suggest either raising the pitch of the tone, if possible, varying the intervals, or grouping the tones so as to produce a rhythm, and particularly reducing the period of the tolling to at most five minutes instead of fifteen long minutes?

As a resident in the vicinity of the Old Baptist Church, I am greatly concerned, particularly as the peals are so loud and penetrating. Often I try to leave my study before they begin, but it must be recognized that I have a right to stay in on a Sunday morning without being subjected to annoyance. I dare say that you would feel just as exercised over a very loud speaker situated, say, in Beck Hall, which would interfere with your sermon in church.

Trusting that you will not find my attitude presumptuous, and counting on the courtesy and fairness of your Board, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

A. A. ROBACK

Finally the administration of a great institution of learning was invoked for the purpose of placing the matter of its own chapel bells, every morning, before the committee in charge of its recently erected memorial church. Only a part of the letter is here reproduced:

You may remember that until a few years ago, the Harvard chapel and class bells gave a cheery sound. Since then, with the purchase of the new massive bell, the penetrating drone or groan expressive of effort in keeping with the church drones in this vicinity (all except St. Paul's chimes) makes it an ordeal to some of us who are especially sensitive to a senseless and dull monotony. On a Sunday morning from 10 to 11, there are about 1000 such sounds emitted by the various churches in this vicinity, the worst of them all being the Baptist Church next to Beck Hall, which for fifteen minutes at intervals of about twenty seconds apart sounds a cat's meow. At 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, these so-called chimes



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are resumed. Every morning at 8:40 for five minutes the Memorial Church adds its contribution. Now I have wondered why, assuming that reminders must be given to worshippers, the call might not be reduced to a minute. Even the most absentminded person would not miss the penetrating sounds; and the monotony would be less annoying. I am not bringing up the question whether an individual has not the right of being undisturbed by penetrating sounds of any sort, whether they come from churches or sound trucks ballyhooing political candidates, but I would suggest, this being an appropriate time for it, (before the college session begins) to reduce the tolling to one minute instead of five minutes every morning.

My letter did not touch on the continual tolling of the bells between class periods, the chiming to announce the quarter-, the half-, the three-quarter, and the full hour, not to mention the striking of the hour on two or three different steeple-bells, interrupting each other and causing confusion, in case one wished to count the strikes. Often, too, the strike sounds double, as if chipped. Fourteen or fifteen is not a rare count. This part of the famous university town may be a striking or, perhaps better, a pealing section, but, if the pun will be excused, the pealing is far from appealing to our æsthetic sense. The occasional sounding of the Russian bells on the Lowell House belfry, in the same vicinity, is a distinct relief as compared with the other peals which are apt to awaken in us a poignant feeling of nostalgia for the church-ringing so beautifully portrayed in Bizet's *L'Arlésienne Suite* (carillon) Debussy's *La Cathédrale Engloutie*, or some of Chopin's nocturnes (e. g., *op.* 37, the one in *G minor*).

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### ADJUSTMENT *versus* RATIONAL STANDARD

That I have not succeeded in reducing the nuisance thus far does not signify that my step was ill-advised or that the pealing is in order. The most that can be said for them is, as I have heard on some occasions, that we should be able to force ourselves not to hear them. To my mind the question should be raised whether these bells are intended for the purpose of testing our endurance or self-control.

I have often wondered how the church members, some of whom must be music lovers, could countenance such an evil. When, however, I once noticed the scores of automobiles lining the street, I found the answer; namely, the church members for whom the peals are intended, calling them to church, live beyond the reach of these sounds, hence they are not irked. The residents in the vicinity, many of whom are annoyed, will not go to the trouble of complaining officially because the source of their annoyance happens to be a church, little realizing that it is not the church which is objected to, but the senseless practice, which may have served a purpose a century ago, when clocks were not to be found in every household, and when the members of a church usually lived within a stone's throw — a practice that is rendered useless now, and more than useless, because of the unvarying and poor quality of the sounds involved. In other words, the practice is a *deviation from a rational standard*, and those respon-

sible for its continuance, when their attention is drawn to the æsthetic sin, are, to say the least, obdurate.

This digression on repetition and monotony may not seem germane in a discussion on music, but it will be observed that there may be a definite correlation between musical taste and tolerance for repetition, and specific suggestions have been made for investigations to test my hypothesis.

In addition, the difference in reaction to irritating conditions which are removable serves to illustrate once more the disparity between the adjustment view of psychoneurosis and its interpretation as a deviation from a rational standard.

#### MUSICAL AGE TESTS

There are young children who can appreciate a Bach fugue without any previous training or direction; and, as we know, there are many adults of the kind who "know what I like" for whom a Bach fugue is next to torture. Experience plays no part in this individual difference. The musically appreciative child is years older than its age; the adult may be a musical imbecile.

It has often been said that you must become adapted to Bach's music, which is generally regarded as intellectualistic. In my own case, I can vouch that the first few phrases from Bach which I heard thrilled me. On the other hand, I had to become accustomed to

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Beethoven's symphonies. The first of these symphonies (which happened to be the third or *Eroica*, conducted by Karl Muck), heard at the age of 22, was described in a letter to a chum as mathematical music. Typical Wagnerian music of the *Tristan* or *Parsifal* type I have never been able to appreciate. Perhaps I have not yet attained that musical age; for, on all sides, are we assured that there is such a wealth of soul-stirring music in these two operas as compared with *Die Meistersinger* or *Tannhäuser*; and all I can hope for is to attain the age of musical senility sometime in the future, although my present feeling is that the Wagner cult, unless kept alive by propaganda, as in the past, is waning. The French have been among the first to evaluate the more pretentious style of Wagner's music as a slowly passing fad which they have humored for a while (Albert Schweitzer in his monumental work on Bach gives more than one intimation of this attitude).

It may yet be that a whole series of tests will be devised in order to establish the M.Q. (musicality quotient) of individuals, but this battery will be quite different from the musical tests now in vogue and seemingly testing everything but musical appreciation.

### DETERMINERS OF MUSICAL APPRECIATION

Just as there are different types of intelligence as well as degrees or levels of intelligence, so there may be different types of musical appreciation. Naturally the perfect kind is that which is all-comprehensive and in-

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cludes all possible types, but we know how much of a *rara avis* such a find is. Even conductors, who must possess catholic tastes, are often divided as to the value of a composition; and some of them display decided leanings in one direction or another. To discover an individual who is equally enthusiastic over Gregorian chants and operas, symphonic music and swing sounds, Debussy and Bach, the harpsichord and the saxophone, classical and romantic masterpieces, is to accomplish a feat which even the most sanguine would not expect to realize.

The factors which determine musical tastes or proclivities have never been inquired into. Certainly they cannot be acquired. Even the innovators, like Beethoven and Wagner, Debussy, Schönberg and Stravinsky must have responded to an *inner impulse* after they had completed their apprenticeship. The musical tie between Liszt and Wagner or the fondness for Bach on the part of Mendelssohn, the musical affiliation of Schubert and Schumann could not have been a sheer circumstance; nor on the other hand could we regard the antipathy between Brahms and Wagner as a mere *odium figulinum* or professional jealousy. There was *something in the personality of these people which found its expression in music of a certain type*. Sometimes an overlap would take place when different selves of two musical adversaries would meet on common ground, as Brahms and Liszt in the Hungarian or Gypsy strain of their nature.

There are constellations in the musical sphere as in

the astronomical. I have observed that those who adore Wagner's Nibelungen cycle will also admire Richard Strauss's tone poems. To them, Liszt of the *Préludes* will be the real Liszt. Possibly they would be the ones to detect divine beauty in Scriabin's "Divine Poem".

On the other hand there are a great many who, like myself, associate such descriptive and consciously elaborated music, with the four-or-five-year plans. On the basis of an extensive survey we may discover that musical preferences go hand in hand with character traits. The Wagnerite is, from my own restricted range of observation, more practical, shrewd, Babbitty, and externally conventionalized, as set off against the Bach-Mozart appreciator, who seems to be more sensitive, individualistic, introverted, and yet more spontaneous and warm-hearted than the Wagner-Strauss "fans".

The musical phase of the personality, i. e., *the reaction of the personality to music*, is one of those currents in the ocean of human nature that have not yet been approached, much less explored, and a good deal may be gained from such an inquiry. Every living person is affected by music of one sort or another, no matter how crude, whether it happens to be represented by the dance cries and drum beatings of the African aborigines or the boisterous clanging of the Chinese tom-toms. Infants have been known to evince an interest in musical sounds, and imbeciles, even idiots, are admittedly more inclined to attend to tones than to anything else. The kind of music one will listen to intently should

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tell us much about the listener, but more insight will be gained when we are in a position to ascertain the *constitutional factors which are responsible for our musical tastes*.

Of course, there will be no dearth of environment-alists who will seek to explain our likes and dislikes in music on the basis of early experiences. One psychologist tells me he hates Bach fugues because he was forced to practice piano exercises in the style of the fugues. An acquaintance who professes a love for music announces her aversion to Bach, on the ground that she heard so much of his music in her early youth, as if one could hear too much of Bach in a single lifetime. On the other hand she claims to be transported by Tchaikovsky's symphonies.

These rationalizations account for nothing. Taste may be cultivated, it is true, but it primarily depends for its proclivity on our mental make-up.





Chapter XIII

SIGNIFICANCE



### XIII

## SIGNIFICANCE AND THE CONDITION OF FUNDAMENTAL PRECLUSION

Although the concept of meaning has been dealt with both philosophically and psychologically on numerous occasions, the concept of significance has been wholly neglected notwithstanding the fact that the word is mentioned frequently in the literature in a conversational sense. One reason for this favoritism is that "*meaning*" was always harbored under the aegis of logic. In fact it passes as the fundamental concept of logic, while significance does not bear that objectivity which attaches to the term meaning or signification.

### NEGLECT OF "SIGNIFICANCE"

*Significance*, in contradistinction to *signification*, has been treated merely as a synonym for *importance*. Now "importance" is a very important word in every other sphere except in philosophy, where it has never, so far as I am aware, been analyzed. Perhaps it is not so much the subjectivity which underlies the term — for the concept "good" is no less subjective — as the fact that it is not a fundamental like "the good", the "true" or the "beautiful", which is responsible for the philosophical ignoring of this term. Significance is on a more discursive level and certainly more objective in

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the sense that it includes meaning and something more. A term or concept may mean something without being significant, in any sense. A proposition, formula, law or principle need not be significant, although its meaning is universally accepted.

Another drawback of the term significance is that it does not seem to belong to any one specific philosophical discipline.

### VARIOUS FIELDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

In statistics, the term has had the best prospect, for all correlations are to be interpreted in terms of their significance, a .70 correlation indicating that there is a causal connection involved in the relationship of the factors compared, while a .17 correlation is usually discarded as due to chance; although it is conceivable that a consistent .17 correlationship would under certain circumstances, where either a very high or no correlationship whatever is expected, be regarded as significant for heuristic purposes.

The psychology of significance is yet to be written.<sup>1</sup> Logically, significance has no status. In ethics, perhaps, it fares a little better with reference to worthy or objectionable acts and the whole field of casuistry. It is in epistemology (theory of knowledge) where the term has had a certain unrecognized vogue, especially in the phrase "epistemological significance" as contrasted

1) The nearest approach thus far to a psychology of significance is the psychology of meaning and pointing references ("intentional existence") of the Akt School.

## Significance

with the psychologistic inquiry into origins. In this usage, however, "significance" was hardly more than a synonym for *validity*, and validity was taken to be the more fundamental of the two. But validity in itself is at least conceivably not an invulnerable fundamental, just as essence was found to be something that could be dispensed with, although so significant a concept in the Middle Ages; and without it the whole branch of metaphysics became a dubious field of research.

### CRITERION OF SIGNIFICANCE

This progressive acceptance or rejection of philosophical problems is a function of *cultural setting*. What may be significant at one age appears paltry at another. The history of philosophy is replete with such instances.

We need not go back to the obscure Middle Ages with the oft-cited specific problems in the controversy between nominalism and realism, or the seemingly more absurd dialectics with regard to the space occupied by angels on the point of a needle, or the possibility of a prostitute regaining her pristine virginity through divine dispensation; but even in our own day, there is a good deal of philosophy written which lacks permanent or at least abiding significance, even though the relations outlined and slants revealed may be absolutely true.

Scholasticism as a method and temperamental bias shows especially a weakness in this direction, not that

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Thomas Aquinas himself was particularly given to the insignificant hair-splitting characteristic of most of the dogmatic text-books, but the medieval spirit which lingers with scholastics, whether they be Thomists or not, expresses itself in an excessive analysis which spends itself, so to speak, on experimenting with the experiment. Hence it is that we find in some texts about 57 varieties of propositions or judgments; or some philosophers will attempt to show that there are 83 senses in which a term has been used. For lexicographic purposes, such a pursuit is perhaps significant. From a philosophical angle, the inquiry is perhaps over-zealous.

### INSTANCES OF INSIGNIFICANCE

Another illustration of the insignificance of certain problems in modern philosophy is the tinkering with hedonistic calculus in ethics, even when it is conceded that pleasures are too subjective and too intrinsically qualitative to be handled mathematically. Many of those who still play at the cross-number puzzle in ethics simply maintain that even if the summation of pleasures cannot be realized, the abstract problem still stands.

In reply to this attitude, I should like to draw up a principle which will do away with such futile investigations, by appealing to the *condition of fundamental preclusion*. Thus, while in mathematics it would be permissible to delve into all sorts of imaginary relationships, surds,  $n$  dimensional spaces, nevertheless whenever, or as soon as we deal with human values, it be-

## Significance

comes necessary to ascertain whether one of the conditions in a given situation which would sanction any inquiry is not precluded, by reason of its fundamental impossibility as a factor in life (See next chapter for an example in connection with the possible depreciation of good qualities because of their commonness), thus throwing out of gear the whole situation.

Since there are universally uniform reactions on the part of the intellectual classes to certain trends, although in the main these reactions, governed as they are by hindsight, may come too late, we may gather that there is inherent *a certain objectivity in the particular situation*, and therefore in the term (significance) which describes it, even if it derives its objectivity from the social age or historical period, and therefore in a sense cannot be considered absolutely objective. The insignificant problems simply fall out in the course of events.

It is such considerations or impulses as these which have made the philosophies of Spinoza, though in a sense a dogmatic philosopher, of Hume, Kant and Schopenhauer so significant as compared with the subtleties of the medieval philosophers although here and there, as in the case of Abélard's formulation of conceptualism and Occam's razor or principle of parsimony, we have real oases in the desert of insignificance.

### SIGNIFICANCE DEEPER THAN VALUE

Sometimes significance is confused with the term value. The values are more specific and fit into dis-

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inct traditional categories, while *significance goes even beyond the range of all axiology* (theory of value); for the very existence of values, the search for them, may theoretically at least not be significant.

For the savage, the racketeer and perhaps even the man in the street, this hypothesis is indeed a fact. In that case we must envisage *significance as the fundamental of all philosophy*, the first principle of methodology; and all speculation then must needs be undertaken with this end in view. The question "significant for whom?" should not enter in, as too Protagorean<sup>2</sup>. "*Significant for the highest development of man,*" is the answer to all such queries.

Some people, whether in philosophy, science, art, statesmanship or religion have sensed this significance in advance of their generation or century: Aristotle, Caesar, Confucius, the Prophets. Others, again, while grappling triumphantly with the most abstruse problems, have been merely fighting either windmills or straw men. The conclusion suggested is that there is *a fundamental significance to which thinkers in various ages are striving, which unfolds itself gradually as the result of human experience* and which clear-minded intellects, not necessarily technical philosophers, can intuitively perceive. Possibly this is what is to be understood by Spinoza's concept of *scientia intuitiva*.

2) Protagoras, it will be recalled, was the sophist who declared that *man is the measure of all things*, precipitating a volley of questions, like "Man in general?" "Which Man?" "How can we measure the hypothetical measure?"



## Chapter XIV

# CHARACTER AND TOTALITARIANISM



#### XIV

### THE CONCEPT OF CHARACTER IN A DICTATOR-RIDDEN WORLD

William James says somewhere that if Aristotle came to life again in our period he would be struck more with the novelty of present-day ethical concepts than with all the new doctrines and facts of the physical sciences. Personally I could never accept this boost for ethics, putting it down to one of James's sanguine moods whenever a practical question came up. It takes but a hasty perusal of Aristotle's *Physics* and his *Nicomachean Ethics* to discover that while the latter is still of actual significance, the former has but historical value. Aristotle's analysis of the virtues, as indeed his whole perspective of ethics, is remarkably modern.

Nevertheless it is true, that certain concepts even in the moral life gradually undergo a change. Thomas Hill Green in a work which has had a tremendous vogue in his day and has been regarded by many as a classic — his *Prolegomena to Ethics* — has made an elaborate attempt to show that personality as a concept grew in depth through the Christian centuries. Naturally a concept pertaining to human qualities can change only as the result of the evolution of these qualities. Although Green's notion of personality is more akin to the concept of character than to the psychological sense

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of personality, we may well wonder whether the fundamental concept of character to an ethicist can change much in the course of centuries; and if that is the case, then all the more reason to wonder how the concept of character can be different in a dictator-ridden world from that in a democratic world. It may be contended too by the wonderers that dictators have always been with us somewhere in the world; that the major philosophers of antiquity, if not definitely molested, were at least greatly annoyed by them. Can we, therefore, consider our own age or period so unique as to constitute it a touchstone to the very conception of character ?

### FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER

In my *Psychology of Character* I have had occasion to define character, from a psychological angle, as an enduring psychophysical disposition to inhibit instinctive tendencies in accordance with regulative principles. I argued that the inhibition *per se* is blind, that the nature of the instinctive tendencies is of some importance, *e. g.*, a universally strong tendency, when inhibited, shows a greater mark of character than the inhibition of a weaker general tendency. The sex instinct, if we did not go farther in our exposition, would, as it indeed does with a certain class of philistines, be the chief criterion of character. Fortunately, however, the higher rôle of the regulative principle in the hierarchy of character factors validates the act; for it is not in the sex

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behavior as such that the *quale* of character manifests itself, but in the pursuance of certain principles in relation to our fellow-men — truth, justice, liberty. Therein lies the gulf between, say, lovemaking which is mutually agreeable to the parties involved although perfect strangers, and rape, especially of a minor.

If our evaluation of character rested on the inhibition of instinctive tendencies alone, it would be necessary to ascertain what for each individual constitutes his greatest temptation and thus rate him high only if he managed to resist that particular urge, but in every other case, we should not be justified in imputing character to him — a situation that is reminiscent of Kant's rigorous standard, and also of Schiller's gibe in that connection.

*Willingly serve I my friend, but I do it, alas!  
with affection. Hence I am plagued with the  
doubt, virtue I have not attained.*

to which the rigid formalist replies:

*This is your only resource, you must stubbornly  
seek to abhor them. Then you can do with disgust  
that which the law may enjoin.*

For practical purposes, it will be sufficient, I think, to treat all the instinctive tendencies as alike in every individual over a lifetime, or we may consider that these natural urges will even themselves up in their strength. One may be more acquisitive, another more lascivious, a third more pugnacious, a fourth more lustful for power, etc.

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### STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

It is different, however, with the regulative principles, which are primarily ethico-logical in nature and govern the interrelation between man and man. While these principles are eternal, not in the sense that they are in Nature, regardless of human existence but as *permanent standards* of civilization, their value may be accentuated or reduced because of social or political conditions, just as the value of gold changes with economic conditions and the law of demand and supply.

Although, truth, for instance, will always serve as an ideal of humanity and will be the goal of science, as a regulative principle validating an act as indicative of character, it could not possess the same force in a world where truth is the rule and falsehood the exception. Similarly, justice would take a secondary place as a regulative principle, if it were the most natural thing for people to be just. The just man in such a world would not receive ethical recognition any more than the person who wears his clothes well or takes good care of himself, although in Spencer's system regularity in itself constitutes a mark of moral conduct.

An objection might naturally be interposed here to the effect that value is thus attacked on the basis of demand and supply rather than on its own intrinsic merit. The answer to this is that every act in keeping with a regulative principle is meritorious in its own right. The question, however, is one of *comparative merit* under various circumstances. Veracity will always be a favor-

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able quality as compared with deceitfulness, but we can realize that there are situations when veracity will be placed lower in the scale than resisting injustice, because the latter involves greater consequences and may determine the extent of the former.

Aside from that, the same question may be raised about genius. Surely, if writing good poetry, or composing fine music were within the power of the average individual, genius would come down a peg. Literature or music would still retain its intrinsic value, but the masters would not be so admired as at present.

What saves the situation is, of course, the impossibility of such a hypothetical condition ever being realized. Just so is it not necessary to fear that character will lose its great significance when most of the world becomes altruistic. It is one of the situations which would illustrate my principle of fundamental preclusion, as outlined in the previous chapter, where it was argued that conditions which are less than a possibility even in the remotest future should not be given space in discussions dealing with human values.

Of all the regulative principles, liberty seems to have undergone the greatest change and is perhaps subject to the greatest fluctuation; for although Spencer may find for his argument a savage tribe which encourages lying, the attitude toward truth and honesty in civilized society has been the same from the days of Hammurabi or earlier. It is not so with the concept of liberty. Slaves were taken for granted as the neces-

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sary equipment of a well-regulated household by the most enlightened minds of Greece and Rome. Cicero, who, in his stand against Caesar, came close to our own opponents of dictatorship, provided nonetheless his indolent son with a plentiful supply of slaves.

Furthermore, the *tyrannos*, who was the equivalent of our *post bellum* dictators, did not call forth an outcry that the rights of the people were encroached upon. The few great philippics and other denunciations were directed against a foreign aggressor or were prompted by personal animus. Ancient Greece, it is true, had at times enjoyed liberty, such as we have scarcely known it today, but the concept had not become for the Greeks a standard, a regulative principle. It was to them merely an experience.

### CONCEPT OF LIBERTY

We need not trace the vicissitudes of the concept of liberty throughout the centuries. What liberty meant in the Middle Ages is too well-known; and one may question very much the nature of the liberty that the French Revolution had brought in its wake. Perhaps it may be said that the concept of liberty has nothing to do with its experience. Possibly in an abstract mathematical sense that is true, but we are here concerned more with an idea which takes hold of our whole life, which obtains a wide scope in the minds of thinking people and which governs the actions of individuals and peoples. A dynamic idea like that must have been ex-



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perienced in the first place, and found to be not only good but a fundamental postulate, a *sine qua non* of human society.

It is only toward the end of the nineteenth century that we had begun to envision and appraise liberty at its proper value. Then came the *débâcle*, and liberty, as a condition, tottered in many countries, but the concept that had already been formed and crystallized still shines in undiminished effulgence.

### VECTORS OF CHARACTER

It is this disparity between the concept and actual conditions which heightens the value of liberty as a regulative principle in the estimation of character, in accordance with the premise laid down earlier in the chapter that the constituents of character derive their relative force and significance from the distance between the concept, or ideal, and actual conditions. We may call these dynamic relationships, *vectors of character*; the situation being not unlike that of a magnetic field, although vastly more complicated.

But the concept of liberty is one thing, and its interpretation or application is another. It is in the concrete that opinions will differ; for even dictators allow themselves to speak of liberty and to favor it. One of these, who not only dictates to his own countrymen but, it would seem, together with his colleagues, rules the world, declared that there were only two democracies in the world — his own country and another,

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where mediæval practices have been extolled and perfected to suit the original purpose — a statement which not only shocked the sensibilities of most intelligent people but even paralyzed their risibilities, so that they were too dumbfounded to smile.

We must, however, make it our task to study even the preposterousness of a dictator's logic, so as to see what make-believe sense there could be in it. It makes no difference, incidentally, whether the dictator heads a reactionary regime or a radical bureaucracy. In this instance, we turn to an apologist for an interpretation which may fit the philosophy of either.

### FASCISTIC LOGIC

In Aline Lion's *The Pedigree of Fascism*, we read:

The People's will is free so long as what they wish is for the common good and their own good, but it is not free to want anything that is either not for the common good or against it. Football is still the best example. The men of a team freely want to win the match and freely do what they are ordered to do by their captain, but they are not free to show off or to spoil the game, to spite the captain or anyone of the men.

This argument is of course not new. German nationalists long before the advent of the Third Reich held the same view. Indeed it is the philosophy of political Absolutism, one might say from time immemorial. In brief, it is that the state alone is free, and every indi-

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vidual partakes of that freedom when he acts in accordance with the dictator's orders, just as when the hand is said to be free if it moves upon the impulse from the mind. Our own Woodrow Wilson, it will be remembered, used a similar argument when confronted with the fact that the drafted soldiers during the World War were unwilling to fight. He attempted to meet the objection by maintaining that these men were a part of a whole nation which was eager to engage in war with the Central Powers. This sort of reasoning I should call the *fallacy of synecdoche*. The argument is of course no more than the old rhetorical figure which refers to the part when the whole is meant, and *vice versa*.

Let us, however, return to the football captain cited by Miss Lion. All analogies, we are constantly warned, are dangerous implements. They are usually too dull to serve our purpose, but this one is an excellent illustration to justify the caution.

In the first place, a captain of a football team is either elected or appointed because of his expertness and prowess in that particular game. I have never known a recent dictator to be elected without recourse to force and intimidation. Nor is it to be taken for granted that the dictator, like the captain, is the best man to rule the country. In some instances he may be about the worst. If a man were to bully the players of a team into electing him captain, although he is not the most competent person for it, they certainly would not feel themselves free in carrying out his orders.

These are the distinctions only on the first level of

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the analogy. On the second level, we have greater ones still. Suppose we allow the dictator to represent perfectly the football captain in his functions, we do not grant that a football captain has any authority over his players except as concerns the winning of a game. If he wishes to introduce foul play, if he makes it his business to break up some other football team, they would not feel free to follow him.

### BRIGANDAGE EXPOSED

Herein lies the great difference between a dictator and a democratic ruler. Unless the former is not only omnipotent, as at least he gradually believes himself to be, but omniscient and omnibeneficent, he is bound to cause a good deal of mischief not only in his own state but in the world at large. Here it must be said for the first time that reactionary, nationalistic or, let us call them by their proper name, Fascistic dictatorships are more pernicious than the so-called proletarian dictatorship. Were Fascism or National Socialism to extend the same notion of freedom to every state, we might perhaps be willing to consider seriously their claim about the part, *i. e.*, the individual, being a cog in a free totality, but it no sooner dawns upon us that the free state referred to is the Fascist's own state than we give up in disgust; for the brigand's law that "might is right" lurks too glaringly from beneath the noble word "freedom" which is used in mockery by dictators and their henchmen. They become aggressors of other

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states not to help their own but in order to extend their power in all directions.

The infantile character of certain apologies for dictatorship will be noted in another passage which is here quoted from the same book:

But if it is implied by that, as the modern sense of the word allows, that he (referring to the Italian dictator) rules against the people's will, it is merely absurd, and one single fact could prove the contrary. When two years ago he asked that a certain sum should be subscribed in dollars towards the paying to the United States War Debt the issue was many times what he had asked. It would not be true to facts to omit that although it was not compulsory, there was a good deal of moral pressure made to get the people to subscribe. But surely they did not need to cover it so many times and the excess was indeed most spontaneously subscribed.

The author of this argument, who is on the teaching staff of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, apparently does not realize that when a bandit brings moral pressure to bear on his victim, asking for a considerable, although indefinite amount, the frightened man will be ready to part with everything. The patriotism of the Italian wealthy class may be explained by the fact that each thought unless he gave more than he could afford, the loan might not be fully subscribed, and then the dictator's whip would crack down on him.

Thus far we have gained the conclusion that the

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liberty component of character is sharpened at a time when liberty is in danger. The interpretation of the concept of liberty and its application to current conditions have also been undertaken, but we must go a step farther in a thesis which seems to have been overlooked and which is calculated to clinch the matter, *viz.*, character cannot manifest itself in a totalitarian state except by resistance. This may sound revolutionary, but it is only a philosophical proposition or corollary that follows from a general understanding of the fundamentals of ethics and character.

### INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND COLLECTIVE FREEDOM

Whatever the essentials of character, as envisaged by various philosophers from Plato and Aristotle to present-day moralists, freedom of action is posited on all sides as a prerequisite, not necessarily freedom of the will in the metaphysical sense, but the mere fact that an individual is an independent agent. Spinoza dealt with this phase of character most profoundly in the fifth part of his immortal *Ethics*.

Yet it is curious that the problem of individual freedom of the will, has never been taken up in conjunction with *collective freedom*. John Stuart Mill tells us at the beginning of his classical essay on *Liberty* somewhat apologetically that his subject is not the "so-called Liberty of the Will—but Civil or Social Liberty." Spinoza, unlike Mill, did not focus his attention on one phase of

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liberty, but reserved his discussion of civil liberty or, what I should call rather, collective freedom to a later stage in his life when he wrote his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. The question, however, before us is *whether there is ever individual freedom in a state that does not allow collective freedom*; in other words, the two are so interdependent that individual freedom and civil liberty, as philosophical problems, cannot be treated the one without the other.

An individual may lead of course a spotless life in a totalitarian state. His character is reputed as of the highest, yet unless he contributes to the liberty of the group, not merely by his many beneficent acts or consideration of the rights of others, but by resisting tyranny in whatever shape it crops up, his character is not of the first order. It lacks the dynamic coloring which character, viewed in a progressive perspective, must reflect. Perhaps it is a similar view which inspired Goethe's famous couplet:

*Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille  
Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt*

### STATIC AND DYNAMIC LIBERTY

The freedom or liberty discussed by philosophers thus far has been of a *static* kind. They delimited the concept, cited examples and illustrations, and came to the well-known conclusion that it is best for everyone to allow freedom of thought and of speech. The treatment is usually, if not always, theoretical, and the

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peroration is apparently addressed to the rulers. The "little man," the man in the street, neither reads the treatises, nor does he know, even if he should peruse the books and articles on liberty, what part he plays in the game. Naturally, I am not overlooking the revolutionary manifestos, the calls for direct action, but these documents are patently propaganda. The issue of freedom is often lost sight of in such agitation, where we have before us warring groups or factions, each striving for an advantage.

So soon as the dynamic principles of liberty are inculcated into the masses, they cease to be masses. They have a *conscious objective* before them. Only then will despots tremble and fall. Mass action is necessary, but not the blind terrorism displayed in the French Revolution and similar upheavals, which serve all the more to enslave the mobs.

The individual who sees injustice about him and either connives at it or feels helpless to do anything, I maintain, is either not free or else he is callous. If he has any human sentiments, he will be undergoing mental conflicts, inner struggles, which in themselves are symptoms of bondage, in Spinoza's sense. Thus do we see that, with due deference to John Stuart Mill, there is a decided kinship between what he calls "individual liberty" and "civil" or "social liberty." *You can not have individual freedom* in the sense of self-determinism (what freedom of the will really amounts to) *unless you share actively in the attainment of collective liberty*. In our dictator-ridden world, the struggle for



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liberty on the part of the individual becomes the highest virtue and its goal is the *summum bonum* of society. The maxim or imperative in this instance, then, becomes, "Act as an individual in the cause of collective freedom as if your fellow-beings are bound to coöperate with you in the same cause, in the firm conviction that this cause is certain to win in the long run."





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